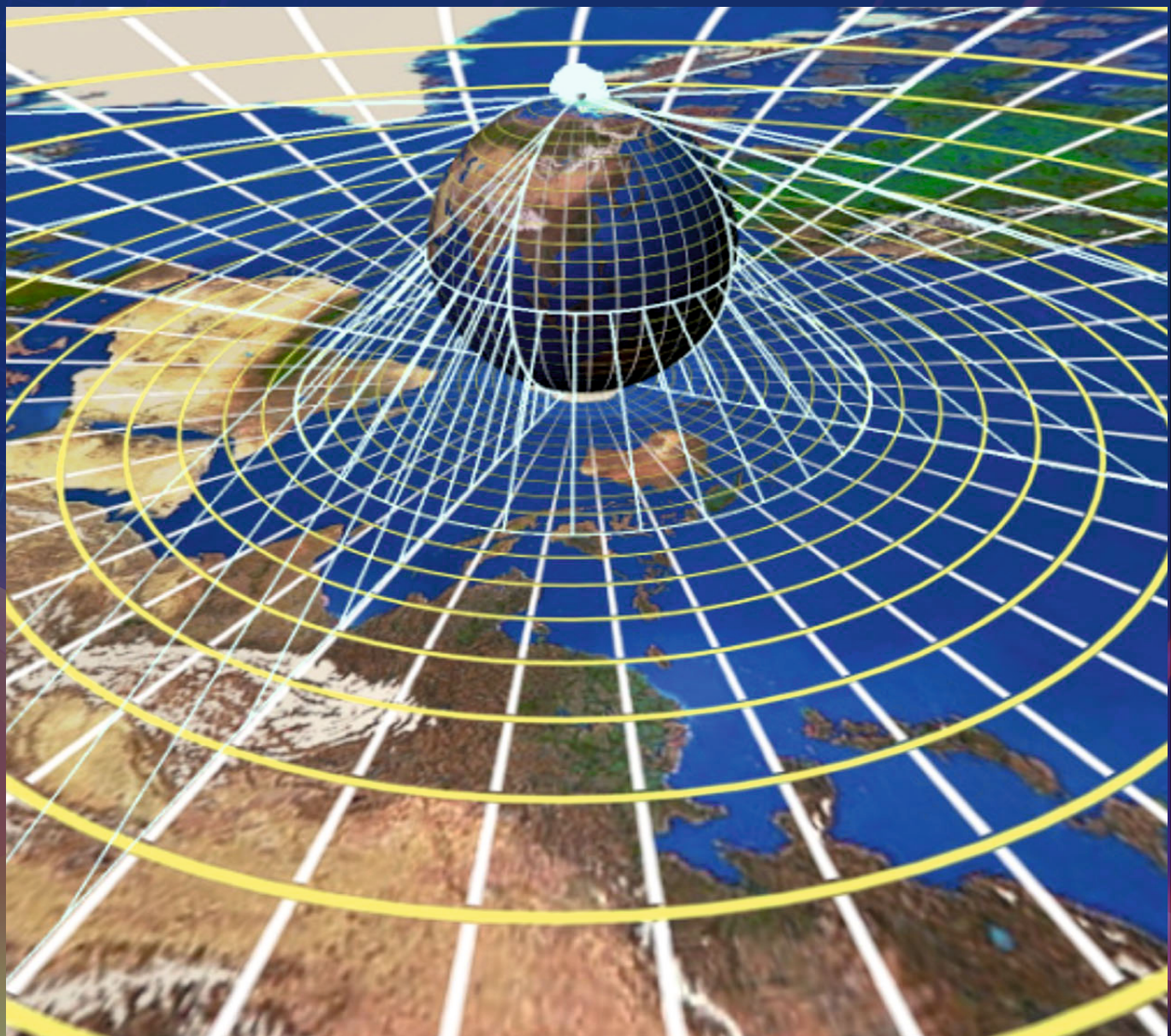


# THE CHOICE



**TBILISI  
2015**



საზოგადოების  
კვლევის ცენტრი  
Centre for Social Studies



## Centre for Social Studies

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# THE CHOICE



Publishing House “**UNIVERSAL**”

Tbilisi 2015

UDC 32.01  
M – 97

The present study was conducted with the support of the Academic Swiss Caucasus Net (ASCN). ASCN is a program aimed at promoting the social sciences and humanities in the South Caucasus (primarily Georgia and Armenia). Its various activities foster the emergence of a new generation of talented scholars. Promising junior researchers receive support through research projects, capacity-building training and scholarships. The program emphasizes the advancement of individuals who, thanks to their ASCN experience, become better integrated in international academic networks. The ASCN program is coordinated and operated by the Interfaculty Institute for Central and Eastern Europe (IICEE) at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). It was initiated and continues to be supported by Gebert Rűf Stiftung.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Gebert Rűf Stiftung or the University of Fribourg.

Picture on the front:

Stereographic projection by Charles Gunn, <http://page.math.tu-berlin.de/~gunn/>  
<https://plus.google.com/photos/±CharlesGunn/albums/5449187476832628769/5449187556088791794?banner=pwa&pid=5449187556088791794&oid=113699099052018683298>

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Publishing House “UNIVERSAL”, 2015

19, I. Chavchavadze Ave., 0179, Tbilisi, Georgia ☎: 2 22 36 09, 5(99) 17 22 30  
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ISBN 978-9941-22-625-0

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## Introduction

The problem is choice.

Neo<sup>1</sup>

To quote an eloquent phrase by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.” The autonomy and precedence of the individual in relation to the social system and its institutions imply normative and empirical tensions between the individual’s freedom and the constraints established by the system/institutions.

A confrontation between freedom and the system would have been insuperable had individuals been unable to influence the system.

It is sometimes said that an individual is free as long as he is free to choose between two or more options. However, a question arises: Is the individual free if the rules of choosing and the options to be chosen have already been established by others? A close examination of this issue sheds light on the limits of an individual’s freedom to choose, especially with respect to social choice. The individual cannot directly influence the agenda of choice because the process of setting the agenda is by definition collective, that is, social and political. What type of freedom should be attributed to individuals in addition to the freedom of choice to overcome these constraints and to exercise cooperative and sovereign control over all elements of the power relations involved in this process?

In this work, we will study agenda setting for political choice and the problems associated with the power to place certain choices before individuals as a result of this agenda.

A democracy allows political choice to take form in the public space. Articulated politics and the media create a symbolic space for agenda setting and interpretations. The structure of this space is defined both by the political system and by the individual perspectives through which the system is interpreted. Through the formation of symbolic meanings in this space, the negative and positive, rights and opportunities, and formal and informal interact and create the distribution of actual power that defines the character of the system.

Symbolic choices made by individuals in this discursive space may appear to be free choices. In reality, however, these choices may mask the process of manipulation of the will of individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> The matrix reloaded. Dir. Andy Wachowski and Larry Wachowski. Warner Bros 2003

The *Matrix* presents this issue metaphorically, as follows<sup>2</sup>. On a sunny day, it is revealed that the reality in which the main character lives is nothing but a computer program written by the architect of the matrix. The matrix symbolizes a system in which individuals are free to make choices but not to participate in the creation of these choices. According to the architect of the matrix, ninety-nine percent of all people will consent to live in the matrix if they are given the freedom to choose. Choices create an illusion of free will.

The autonomy and precedence of the individual in relation to the system become fictitious if the informal power to set the agenda belongs to someone else, namely, the symbolic “architect of the matrix”. The negative freedom of expression that is conferred by a democracy means nothing if individuals do not also have the positive ability to define the agenda. This ability is not achieved automatically but rather via informal institutions of interpretation, which are by definition forms of political power.

\* \* \*

This volume analyzes the issue of political choice in Georgia’s contemporary context.

The work features both the results of empirical studies and an innovative theoretical vision. The empirical component is based on qualitative and quantitative research conducted prior to the 2013 presidential election. This research sought to identify links between the environment for political discourse, the political agenda, voter preferences, voter behavior, the media and sociodemographic factors. The theoretical portion is based on a broad, relativist vision of democracy and aims to model the collective choice of individuals in a manner that takes into consideration the agenda-setting capacity of individuals.

The research was made possible by financial support provided by the Academic Swiss Caucasus Net through its project titled *Analyzing the Georgian Political System: Policy Agenda Control as a Source of Power*.

This publication is the result of collective work and reflects the different views and approaches of its authors. Therefore, instead of a single, continuous

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<sup>2</sup> The “Matrix”, “Matrix Reloaded”, and “The Matrix Revolution” comprise a trilogy in which the main character, Neo, makes several choices. First, he must choose between red and blue pills; one will lead him to reality and the other will bring him back to the Matrix. In another scene, Neo is told by the prophet (Oracle) that he is about to choose between his own life and that of Morpheus. In the sequel, the Architect (the Matrix creator) forces him to choose between two doors, one that will enable him to save Trinity but doom everyone outside of the Matrix to perdition and one that will allow him to save everyone except Trinity.

text authored by several researchers, we opted to publish a collection of chapters, written separately, thereby allowing the authors to apply different methodologies and to express their respective views on the issue in question.

The first three chapters (authored by Marina Muskhelishvili, with the second chapter coauthored by Ivane Kechakhmadze) are dedicated to the elaboration of a new model of collective (democratic) choice. The first chapter analyzes contradictions within the theory of democracy that are related to the agenda-setting problem. The mathematical findings employed by social choice theory seem to expose insurmountable internal contradictions within democracy. The second chapter introduces new axiomatic assumptions to resolve the problem, develops a model for a new approach using non-Euclidean, projective geometry, and applies this model to the 2013 presidential election. The third chapter links the model to the structure of the media environment and formulates new hypotheses regarding the character of the transformation of Georgia's political system.

The fourth and fifth chapters (authored by Lia Mezvrishvili) analyze political processes in terms of the classical theory of representation. The fourth chapter outlines the nature of partisan representation as a characteristic of Western democracy, describes its historical transformation, and explains the crisis that it faces today. The fifth chapter is dedicated to the results and interpretations of a survey conducted prior to the 2013 presidential election. In that chapter, the author draws parallels between the current processes in Georgia and the processes that occurred in postindustrial states and attempts to discern similarities and differences.

The sixth chapter (authored by Mariam Iakobidze) features a case study that involves the phenomenology of Georgian political discourse and is based on Laclau's usage of "empty signifiers" to describe populist democracy. The case study shows how *Europe*, as an empty signifier, is being filled with different content in different contexts and explains how the alternative interpretations of *Europe* are at the center of a battle between various discourses.

This volume raises several questions to which unequivocal answers have yet to be provided. Here we emphasize only one, politically important issue: which better defines the specificity of Georgia's political process - the logic behind an unfinished transformation or the new global trends systemically affecting democracy as such? Resolution of this question is important to future development. If Georgia's processes are directed by the logic of an unfinished transformation, then Georgia, after proceeding down a particular path, will resemble one of the existing regimes (either democratic or authoritarian). Conversely, if Georgia's reality is a manifestation of the global process through

which democracy is transforming itself, then Georgia must be part of a global trend that has yet to be fully defined. In this case, Georgia – as well as the existing consolidated regimes – is headed in an unknown direction.

\* \* \*

The authors express their gratitude to the Academic Swiss Caucasus Net for its financial support and to its administration for bearing with this group, which was guided by the logic of creative process rather than project deadlines.

Several young researchers participated at different stages of the project in a manner that enriched the study process: Beka Natsvlishvili, Khatia Nadaraia, Revaz Karanadze, Mate Gabitsinashvili, Guri Sultanishvili, Mariam Gachehechiladze, Lasha Kharazi and Ani Chankotadze. In reality, the list of authors is longer than that presented on the content page.

Marina Muskhelishvili expresses her gratitude to the Fulbright Program for supporting her visit to Washington University in Saint Louis in 2009-2010. It was within this program that she began working on the theoretical model that acquires, more or less, complete lineaments in this volume.



## CHAPTER 1.

### Democracy and Social Choice Theory

*Marina Muskhelishvili*

#### Introduction

What is democracy? Is it a normative ideal that exists only in utopians' dreams or pragmatic and realistic goals that can be achieved through the political process? This question is particularly significant in the context of social choice theory because the conclusions in this theoretical area are often perceived as proving the impossibility of democracy with mathematical precision.

Social choice explores different methods of collective decision making. Like democracy, this theory is based on the normative assumption that any collective decision is an outcome of individual preferences. Therefore, a collective decision should take into consideration each member of society and his aspirations and ambitions such that a common will is formed in a manner that ensures that all voices are heard. That is why "social choice" as a concept can be understood as the "will of the people", which is achieved through a procedure of aggregation.

"The informational foundations of modern social choice theory relate closely to the basic democratic conviction that social judgments and public decisions must depend, in some transparent way, on individual preferences, broadly understood." (Sen, 2002, p.32).

Like pluralistic democracy, social choice theory studies conditions and opportunities that yield equality among people with different values and aspirations. The question is how to arrange the decision-making process to ensure that the process itself does not determine the winner. Is it possible to go through a finite process of decision making and thereby reach a decision that is invariant to the process itself? That is, if the procedures of the decision-making process are deemed equivalent to a political system, is it possible to arrange the system in such a way that neither of the parties' priorities are favored and the system is close to equality? In political terms, is it possible for a liberal, conservative and socialist to agree on a constitution that does not prioritize any of these three ideologies but rather gives all three the possibility of free and equal competition?

## CHAPTER 1.

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Mathematical theorems indicate that the establishment of such a constitution is impossible.

The mathematical study of the principle of collective choice was pioneered by Marquis de Condorcet, who made paradoxical observations. On the one hand, his observations support the benefits of democracy, but on the other hand, they reject its possibilities.

Consider a simple example (which is rare in real politics). There are two possible decisions, one of which must be chosen. We can call these decisions A and B. Suppose that each member of society is likely to consider A more desirable than B, even if the difference is very small. In this case, as the number of people taking part in the vote increases, the probability that decision A will be chosen also increases. Decisions made using democratic methods are likely to yield better results compared with decisions made by a single person or by small groups of people. When the choice is not between desirable and undesirable but between right and wrong, the principle is known as Condorcet's jury theorem (Dahl, 1989, pp.141-142).

Although the jury theorem maintains that the vote is a useful decision-making mechanism, Condorcet's paradox casts doubt on this theorem.

The problem arises when there are more than two alternatives (usually, three options are considered). In this case, the outcome may depend not only on each voter's choice but also on the voting procedure. This phenomenon is known as Condorcet's paradox.

Let us suppose that there are three possible alternatives, which we will call A, B and C. Suppose that the desirability of A, B and C cannot be ordered for everybody, although they can be ordered for each individual. That is, one individual may find C preferable to B and B preferable to A, whereas another individual may find C preferable to A and A preferable to B. It is thus clear that the choice is not between 1, 5 and 10 dollars. Rather, let us imagine that a choice must be made between building a school, a stadium or a hospital. Suppose that there are three hierarchies of priorities among the voters:

1. School 2. Stadium 3. Hospital
1. Stadium 2. Hospital 3. School
1. Hospital 2. School 3. Stadium

Suppose that these three groups of voters are of equal size, i.e., society is divided into three equal parts. Is it possible to unambiguously/clearly determine society's choice? What should be built – a school, hospital or a stadium?

Condorcet showed that in two-stage voting procedures, which entail a first

choice between two alternatives and then a second choice between the winning alternative and a third alternative, the results will depend on the sequence. According to Condorcet, the option that ultimately wins will always be the alternative that did not participate in the first round of voting. Thus, it is possible to achieve desired results by manipulating the sequence of events.

If there is no such manipulation and the alternative sequences are determined randomly, the voting process can continue indefinitely without reaching a clear decision. The result is chaos – a situation in which society frequently changes its decisions and there is no final result. The choice is thus between a dictatorship, wherein a manipulator achieves his desired results, and chaos, wherein decision making is an endless and inconclusive procedure.

Chaos or dictatorship – are these two alternatives the inevitable result of the voting procedure?

In real politics, this situation is caused by an unavoidable precondition, namely, the lack of transitivity between options A, B and C. Transitivity means that there is specific ordering between the options. For example, if A is better than B, and B is better than C, this means that A is automatically better than C. Even if transitivity holds for individuals, there may be no such relation for society as a whole. These three alternatives have equal but distinct values whose worth differs across individuals. In more political terms, these values may represent freedom, equality and solidarity. We can see that establishing a hierarchy among them will always lead to the domination of a particular political ideology.

The second prerequisite that can be found in Condorcet's paradox does not at first glance seem inevitable. This prerequisite is the decision-making procedure itself: two-stage majority rule voting. Is there a better procedure that can determine "the will of people" unambiguously, thereby avoiding chaos and dictatorship?

According to Kenneth Arrow's impossibility theorem, there is no such procedure. The impossibility theorem maintains that given certain axiomatic assumptions, there is no method that aggregates votes in a manner that can alter the effects of Condorcet's paradox. That is, whatever the constitution of society, if there is no consensus as to the hierarchy of certain basic values, voting will always lead to either chaos or dictatorship.

There are two ways to avoid a cyclical (chaotic) sequence of collective decisions: either society should be "ordered" to achieve a consensus on certain basic values or it should have a "biased" constitution that establishes the values that will hold privileged positions. Both of these approaches limit equality.

Note that this theorem is equally applicable to both direct and

representative democracy. Regardless of what A, B and C represent (for example, they may be answers to referendum questions in a direct democracy system, candidates to be elected as representatives, or legislative provisions voted on by Parliament), the voting paradox is equally applicable. Accordingly, forming the common will is a problem that cannot be solved by transitioning from direct democracy to representative democracy or by introducing constitutional engineering and other mechanisms.

Kenneth Arrow's theorem lies at the middle of social choice theory. Its stronger variant, the chaos theorem, is more important for this study. According to the chaos theorem, not only is it difficult to achieve a stable outcome but also to ensure any outcome through purposeful action. This is what Schofield calls chaos

"McKelvey (1976) and Schofield (1978) showed that in absence of a majority-rule equilibrium implies that virtually any policy outcome is possible. Hence, those who control the agenda can engage in all sorts of manipulations. A monopoly agenda setter can achieve almost any outcome he wishes, providing the appropriate order of paired options considered by the voting group operating under majority rules (Shepsle, 1979)." (Majone, 2006. pp.229-230).

The chaos theorem offers a completely different perspective on the democracy issue. It clearly indicates that agenda-setting power must be taken very seriously because it represents a specific and effective means of achieving political goals, which is one type of political power.

It is well known that theories of democracy are replete with paradoxes and rival visions. However, because these theories rarely refer explicitly to agenda setting, it is necessary to analyze them to determine what these theories can offer in terms of resolving the impossibility paradox. In the following sections, we show that the classical theories of democracy do not provide an adequate response to the challenges of the chaos theorem.

### **The problem is not in the theorem but in its interpretation**

Before we start to analyze theories of democracy, we will formulate an approach that is the basis of the mathematical model constructed in the following chapter.

According to this approach, the paradox does not claim that democracy is impossible. Rather, it denies the positivist understanding of democracy, which involves the separation of the substance of the decision from the decision-making process. According to the separation principle, political will and

preferences, both individual and collective, should not depend on the political process but rather be revealed as a result of this process. In particular, the voting procedure represents a method for approximating such political will/preference.

However, if viewed from a relativist perspective, collective will encompasses both substance and process. Objectively, there is only a unity of individuals whose members have the right and opportunity to participate in the formation of polity pursuant to a social contract. The history of this unity unfolds over space and time, bringing a relativistic quality to the will of the unity.

This vision suggests that procedural axioms and methods of vote aggregation should not be separated from the content that defines their result. The substance of political decisions is connected with normatively corresponding procedural rules and assumptions. That is, although there is no such thing as “collective will” if it is viewed purely as substance, this term can acquire a new meaning if substance and procedure are perceived together as a whole.

The connection between substance and procedure is established through interpretation, or meaning formation. Substance is interpreted in the context created by the procedure, that is, the decision-making agenda. Simply put, although the goals and the means are connected, this connection does not imply causation; the goals and the means are not conditioned upon one another. Unity of goals and means is not only a compromise between them but also a dynamic interpretation process through which history is created.

Indeed, taken separately, the will/preference (for example “Georgia’s European choice”) of the people may be used in public political discourse to express the political views of an individual or a group. However, this will/preference by itself has no meaning; it only acquires a real political meaning when considered/reviewed in the context of the opposing will/preference, together with action dynamics and direction. Depending on the content of the opposing will/preference (e.g., pro-Russian, pro-American or pro-Georgian), a different coalition is formed, and different means of achieving the goal are defined. In the context of present-day Georgia, the first preference (anti-Russian) is elitist, to some extent anti-democratic and tending toward meritocracy. On the contrary, the second preference (anti-American) respects the social-democratic values of Europe, namely, solidarity and egalitarianism. The third preference (pro-Georgian) is anti-globalist, parochial and conservative. It is prone to the formation of a national identity and the defense of state sovereignty. Each of these preferences represents a different ideology



and a corresponding interpretation of procedural justice. Thus, the political behavior of Georgian citizens does not depend as much on the simply formulated preference for “Europe” as it does on the interpretation of this preference in light of a given agenda: “Europe-Russia”, “Europe-America”, or “Europe-Georgia”.<sup>1</sup>

We have introduced three concepts – preference, agenda, and interpretation – as the components of the political process. Here, it is necessary to clarify certain terminology. “Agenda” and “agenda + interpretation” may be used synonymously in various works. In media studies, agenda setting is understood as raising the issue and emphasizing its importance in the political field:

“Agenda setting is the process *of* the mass media presenting certain issues frequently and prominently with the result that large segments of the public come to perceive those issues as more important than others. Simply put, the more coverage an issue receives, the more important it is to people.” (Coleman, 2009, p. 147).

However, actualization of the issue does not necessarily mean that it acquires a particular meaning (interpretation). Giving an issue such meaning is called “framing”, or secondary agenda setting. Unlike in media studies, agenda is understood in social choice theory as “agenda + interpretation”. This is closer to the concept of decision making and refers to a dichotomous choice between two concrete alternatives. In this case, each alternative does not exist separately but rather is interpreted in relation to the opposing option. It is this second definition of “agenda” that transforms it into a bridge between procedure and substance.

Although this vision suggests that the collective will is linked to the collective procedure, insofar as the collective will is revealed by the collective procedure, it does not imply that individual preferences exist pre-procedurally and independently or that they precede and define the collective preference. Individual preferences are also conditional; they are dependent on the meaning given to them by the individual after the individual assesses the overall situation. Because different individuals may reach different conclusions, the plain aggregation of their votes may be a meaningless task. The simple counting of votes acquires political meaning only when the individuals share a common interpretation of the situation.

Individuals involved in the democratic process have an impact not only on

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<sup>1</sup> This discourse is discussed further in Chapter 6.

the substance of a collective decision but also on the interpretation of that decision and on the decision-making procedure itself. The interpretation of a decision can be normative and/or strategic (situational). For example, an individual who feels that he might be in the minority, whose interests and positions will not be defended by voting, is likely to try to delay or slow the decision-making procedure and to increase the time allowed for public deliberation. This delay will enable the individual to present more arguments in defense of his own vision. The individual might also try to prevent the decision by changing its interpretation; for example, he might request a court to intervene on the grounds that the decision unfairly limits the rights of individuals in the minority. Alternatively, if an individual has sufficient power, he might add other items to the agenda to render the decision meaningless or to significantly change it. All of these activities are components of a typical political process and help to establish the interaction between substance and procedure.

The identification of democracy with the will of the majority alone is impermissible even in theory. Democracy encompasses a variety of non-transitive normative principles and values that contradict each other. Thus, even in the absence of the social choice paradox, democracy cannot be given a normatively neutral statutory definition beyond the abstract concept of “popular sovereignty”. This impossibility applies both to the formulation of an ideal democracy and to the determination of its institutional realization. In a sense, democracy is an “empty signifier” that is given different meanings by different individuals to accord with the interpretation that is closest to their respective visions. This relativistic understanding of democracy makes its institutional realization dependent on a country’s political culture and links it to the social contract that was formed in a given country in given historical circumstances (Dryzek, 2004).

In such a dynamic model, the only aspect that remains of the traditional view of democracy is the polity of sovereign and equal subjects. In this model, the subject participates in politics not because of a single majoritarian game but due to the plurality of choices. The various games are chosen by the individual according to his own vision and possibilities. As an initial matter, this individual takes part in the formation of the political agenda by determining which issues come within the political field/scope and by shaping the definitions of “politics” and “political” for the given society.

Determining which issues belong in the political field is the key question in politics. This question is solved not by a majority voting on issues that are already political but by the individuals who exert their power to shape the agenda. The scope of the application of the “popular will” is contextually related

to the essence of “the political”. How a problem is interpreted and how its nature is determined directly influence the procedure, which seems fair in relation to the given problems. The boundaries between individualism and collectivism, the separation of the private from the public, and the transformation of the relationship between democracy and technocracy together create historical configurations of “the political” that are associated with the dynamic use of agenda-setting power.

Thus, collective decision-making procedures, as well as their content/substance, are historical products and are the subjects of interlinked transformations. Their specific historical institutional forms are based on values that reflect the dominant vision of the “political”. For example, differences between the Anglo-Saxon and European models of democracy lie not only in their respective constitutional arrangements but also in the different interpretations of the principles embodied in the constitutions (Powell, 2000). Moreover, we are going to show that other possible forms of democracy exist in addition to these two. In theory, the concept of democracy is compatible with not just two but three institutional types that accord with the three political functions of the individual (preference, agenda and interpretation): majoritarian, proportional and populist.

Therefore, the definition of democracy is to some extent a product of a country’s social contract, and it is this social contract that makes it possible to overcome the paradox of impossibility. There is always a certain distance, or normative difference, between the social contract understood as popular will and the will of the majority. This distance is necessary because it allows social development to remain open, not deterministic. This distance permits the transformation of basic values and allows modifications to the social contract over time. However, a practical question remains: is an approximation between the two concepts (social contract and majority will) possible? Can they be brought closer together by multi-stage voting, or will this process be cyclic and chaotic and deprive the majority will of legitimacy?

Full democracy requires not only the aggregation of individual preferences but also the participation of individuals in the process through which the agenda is chosen and its meaning formed. Only those who can influence all aspects of decision making are the sovereign participants in the formation of democratic, or common, will. Such subjects do not simply choose among what is offered in a given historic moment; rather, they participate in the creation of this historical dynamic. Participation in the formation of a collective decision agenda makes individuals the subjects of history as well as of politics and gives them the power to influence the future, both individually and collectively.

**Popular will cannot govern – the governance of people  
through voting is a populist dream**

If one agrees with the relativistic vision presented in the previous section, then one must acknowledge that there can never be an explicitly interpreted will of the people. Instead, there must be several political interpretations that reflect this will. Simple vote aggregation is not an unequivocal method to identify this will because this method requires that everyone agree on the interpretation of the issue, which is a politically unachievable task. The impossibility of ascribing one specific meaning to the will of the people may be viewed as an impossibility of democracy from the positivist perspective.

If one refuses to recognize the plurality of political interpretations of people's will, one may ascribe to a radically different view that denies the possibility of government by the people. According to this approach, it is necessary to reject the attempt to determine/identify people's will through voting and to consider the veto the only function of elections. This approach is developed by Riker in social choice theory and by Popper and Schumpeter in democracy theory. These visions may be combined into a single category, which will be called the liberal, or elitist, view of democracy.

According to Popper, sovereignty of the people and government according to the will of the people are meaningless/pointless philosophical concepts that obscure the relevant questions about the nature of governance. Specifically, rather than arguing about who should govern, we should ask how political institutions can be organized to ensure that bad and incompetent rulers cannot cause serious harm to the people. Instead of granting sovereignty to the people, we should restrict potential tyranny, which is a result of uncontrolled governance. Elections cannot create the best governance but can avoid a very bad form of governance without violence and destabilization (Popper, 2011, p. 292). This concept of democracy is not based on the majority governance principle; elections provide a measure of control over the government but nothing more (Popper, 2011, pp. 299-300). Popper argues that people should only have the right to veto. Preferences expressed through elections no longer represent political decisions but rather indicate rejection or acceptance of decisions made by others (governors).

Riker's claims are quite similar, but he uses mathematical rather than philosophical reasoning. Taking into consideration the voting paradoxes, Riker believes that there is no reason to identify decisions made through voting with the popular will.

According to Riker, voting may have two different meanings – liberal and

populist. The liberal vision (which he traces to Madison) suggests that voting has only one function, namely, to control politicians. Frequent general elections limit politicians and guarantees the freedom of individuals (Riker, 1982, p.9). Frequent and inclusive elections restrict politicians and provide individual liberties. According to the populist view (derived from Rousseau's social contract), individuals participate in a collective will formation process by voting. The actions of the politicians are based on this collective will.

According to Riker, only the liberal vision overcomes the cyclical paradox of voting. The populist vision does not overcome this paradox because the cyclical process excludes the possibility of determining the real will of the people through voting.

Note that the meaning of the term "populism" as used in this study differs from that of Riker. The tradition of political thought that is associated by Riker with Rousseau is referred to as the Republican tradition, which is closer to the terminology of the European authors. The phenomenon of populism is not linked to the general will but rather to democracy, which is perceived as governance by the majority through general elections.

If one draws a parallel with the terminology of Rousseau, the difference between democracy and republicanism is in line with the difference between the common will and the general will, between the majority and the all. A social contract represents the general will, which may be different from the majority will. Rousseau clearly indicates that this difference depends on the sequence of events. If groups that consider their particular interests more important than the general will emerge first, the confrontation and struggle between groups could obstruct the formation of general will (i.e., the social contract). Thus, the will of the majority is not the same as the social contract (Rousseau, 1762).

Despite Riker's theoretical error in the description of Rousseau's thoughts, both Riker and Rousseau perceive the same problem: voting does not ensure the determination of the general will. Moreover, Riker believes that manipulation of the agenda is an old and trivial political method. He analyses many empirical examples of such manipulation (Riker, 1986) and indicates that voters are not passive victims of manipulation; rather, voters are able to respond by acting strategically, modifying their choices and neutralizing the results of the manipulation. Nevertheless, manipulation remains one of the strongest levers in politics and is as old as the "divide and rule" strategy and other well-known political tricks. Note that this strategic behavior, which is associated with the interpretation of situations by either political leaders or voters, is viewed by Riker as a shortcoming of democracy and not a necessary component.



Consideration of the views of both Popper and Riker gives rise to the following questions:

If democracy is interpreted in this manner, rulers who have absolute power to make decisions and determine the agenda are required. In this situation, how can one avoid a cyclical process whereby voters must constantly choose between bad and worse, with no hope of achieving good governance? If agenda setting is monopolized by a specific elite group, how can the poor outcomes predicted by the chaos theorem be avoided through vetoes? Riker has no answer to these questions. In contrast, Popper formulates his version using completely different terminology.

Popper rejects historicism, which is defined as a claim on knowledge of the principles of development based on the objectivity of historical processes. He describes leaders who try to rationalize or justify distant goals based on such knowledge as false preachers. These false preachers aim for utopian social engineering and set holistic and idealistic goals. They transform the agenda of reaching these goals into decision-making logic. The result is the formation of a totalitarian political space where freedom and rational policy cease to exist.

By contrast, the principle of “gradual social engineering” implies adapting the agenda to the problems that are actually of concern to society. This agenda does not set lofty goals but rather creates a rational, gradual and evolutionary path by which to transform society. It is based on experience, judgment, and the making and correcting of mistakes. When necessary, this agenda gives society an opportunity to render a verdict on the government based on societal interests.

Utopian social engineering is teleological. It has an ultimate goal; to achieve this goal, utopian social engineering struggles to overcome possible conflicts between private interests and the final outcome. In contrast, gradual engineering focuses not on an ideal society but rather on existing social problems (Popper, 2011, pp.360-365). Utopian social engineering creates a “closed” method of development that is managed by the leaders with the best knowledge of historical processes. Gradual engineering leaves the final outcome “open” and allows for multiple developmental alternatives; therefore, it confers more discretionary power on members of society compared with utopian social engineering.

If we analyze this vision, we conclude that Popper perceives a threat in the process; namely, that political leaders will appropriate and monopolize the agenda. Popper believes that it would be better if the future goal (which determines the agenda) did not exist because this goal may be reinterpreted into totalitarian ideology.

Popper's somewhat conservative, anti-ideological vision may be attractive to liberal individualists, but it lacks a crucial element: it does not explain how politics can be transformed into a rational, gradual, emotionless, non-populist and non-interpretative activity. Ultimately, Popper's vision remains as utopian as the ideological totalitarianism that he criticizes.

In today's post-modern political communication space, where scandal, personalization, agenda manipulation and rejection of rational pragmatism has become the rule rather than the exception, it is much more realistic to consider the formation of an open society not by limiting the agenda but by diversifying it; not by overcoming historicism but by allowing a competitive struggle between different interpretations of the future.

In this regard, Schumpeter's view is much more contemporary. He excludes the possibility that the common will of the people exists. He is radical in criticizing what he calls the classical doctrine of democracy (Schumpeter, 2003). Schumpeter argues that the common good, as well as common will, cannot exist and is empirically impossible to achieve because an individual's political views and positions are not formed in isolation but rather are the result of political propaganda, which is always manipulative, biased and instrumental.

For Schumpeter, democracy is not governance by the people but rather governance through competition: "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote." (Schumpeter, 2003, p.269).

This democracy functions as a competitive market and is based on the principle of supply and demand. Political leaders participate in the competitive struggle for votes; therefore, these leaders play a special role in the formation of the collective will. Using our terminology, Schumpeterian leaders are agenda setters. In contrast to Dahl (who is analyzed in the following section), Schumpeter ascribes a major role to the leaders because of their special functional role in political power.

In contrast to older theories of democracy, Schumpeter's approach uniquely identifies democracy not with the common will but with majority consent. Voters express their support for leaders or refuse to support them. Democracy is the governance of professional politicians.

"First of all, according to the view we have taken, democracy does not mean and cannot mean that the people actually rule in any obvious sense of the terms "people" and "rule." Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them. But since they might decide this also in entirely undemocratic ways, we have

had to narrow our definition by adding a further criterion identifying the democratic method, viz., free competition among would-be leaders for the vote of the electorate. Now one aspect of this may be expressed by saying that democracy is the rule of the politician.” (Schumpeter, 2003, p 284-285).

One can say that Schumpeter’s approach “paved the way” for postmodernism in democracy theory. This approach leaves open the question of how to evaluate system performance outcomes. If the will of people does not exist, governance cannot be evaluated by comparing governance decisions to this will. However, if the aggregate of individual satisfactions is taken as a criterion, we get a paradox - the system is evaluated based on features that are characteristic of the system itself. External evaluation criteria are ambiguous as well. What is a flourishing democracy? Who can determine whether a democracy is flourishing, and how? Schumpeter does not answer this question, although he uses the term in a relativistic way. Specifically, he claims that democracy flourishes only in societies with particular social patterns:

“Democracy thrives in social patterns that display certain characteristics, and it might well be doubted whether there is any sense in asking how it would fare in others that lack those characteristics—or how the people in those other patterns would fare with it”. (Schumpeter, 2003, p.290).

Procedural democracy, therefore, is not a universal form of governance; its success depends not so much on the arrangement but on external factors, such as a sufficient number of "good" leaders; a professional bureaucracy; "democratic self-control"; limitations on the field of political decisions, etc. In other words, "good governance" is not derived from the benefits of democracy; rather, the stability of democracy is conditioned by "good governance".

Despite the inferiority of Schumpeter's interpretation of democracy, his vision had an amazing impact on democratization processes worldwide at the end of the twentieth century. His post-modern technocratic interpretation made his vision universal and made it the best institutional mechanism for the global spread of democracy, along with the market economy. This approach influenced the political transformation in Georgia, where the difficulties associated with the combination of democracy and leadership in this process are evident.

For those who embrace the normative ideals of democracy, the theories reviewed above might seem cynical because they limit the dream of political equality. There is also another problem: liberal and elitist theories that aim to overcome agenda paradox are unable to answer the following traditional

question: "Who guards the guardians?" Both Popper and Schumpeter suggest that the ruler's behavior ensures "good governance" only if the ruler adheres to certain assumptions concerning the methods of agenda formation. For Popper, agenda formation is not ideological; for Schumpeter, agenda formation is professional and reserved. However, these assumptions are similar in nature to good intentions because there are no mechanisms for their realization in the works of Popper or Schumpeter. The approaches offered by pluralist democracy theorists (Dahl) are much more acceptable from normative and institutional points of view.

### **For democracy to work, the institutions of participation and deliberation are necessary in addition to elections**

If one agrees with the idea that the substance of political decisions is linked to the decision-making process, one must conclude that political power is exercised not only by participating in decision making but also by controlling the decision-making process. How do individuals participate in the control of this process? The principle "one person - one vote" does not work in this case. In contrast to the moment of making the decision, when everybody votes simultaneously, participation in the pre-decision process is not simultaneous and is characterized by several important aspects, including its dynamics, sequence, individual initiatives, leadership, etc. Key elements of the process are agenda setting, formation of meaning (interpretation) and restriction of the area of legitimate decisions. Who should have power in this process, and how should that power be used? We will focus on the power to set agendas, which according to the theorem of chaos is more important than voting in terms of influencing decisions.

Because agenda-setting power may outweigh the aggregate power of votes expressed through elections, it is important to consider the normative framework and empirical implementation of agenda setting, as well as the institutional mechanisms that regulate it.

Agenda setting has never been a subject of the theory of democracy. In classical works, agenda setting is mentioned in the context of leadership and leaders because agendas are formed by individuals. In discussions of political technology, agenda setting emerges as an important topic in the context of the sequence of events (given that the agenda is defined prior to the decision making) because Machiavellian republicanism recognizes manipulation as a legitimate instrument of power (Held, 2006).

Contemporary authors suggest three different ways to overcome the problem of agenda setting:

A. Agenda setting is a political power and thus should belong to the people. Members of society should have the positive right and the opportunity to include their respective interests in the agenda;

B. Agenda manipulation is limited if decisions are made through deliberation. Deliberation creates a consensual space – the social contract – which makes it possible to narrow the gap between the will of people and the will of the majority.

C. The agenda is set by elites, but a well-planned constitution limits opportunities for manipulation; the division of powers and power sharing create counterbalances and prevent chaotic governance.

### *A. Participation*

Robert Dahl is a theorist who tried to resolve the agenda-setting paradoxes of the theory of democracy.

According to Dahl, agenda setting is not just a procedure that should be arranged in a manner that reveals the will of the people. Rather, the agenda itself is a part of the popular will. Everyone has their own preferences regarding the agenda. If democracy represents the governance of sovereign people, the governmental agenda should be derived from these preferences using certain procedural rules.

For the governance process to meet democratic ideals, it must satisfy numerous criteria (e.g., effective participation, equal suffrage, informed understanding and adult involvement). One such criterion is control of the agenda by the people: "The members must have an exclusive opportunity to decide and, if they choose, what matters are to be placed on the agenda." (Dahl, 1998, p.38).

This normative ideal of democracy exists only in theory. However, although democracy in its full form is unattainable, it is possible to partially realize this ideal. Dahl refers to political institutions in modern representative democracies as polyarchy. These institutions (elected officials; free, frequent and fair elections; freedom of expression; access to alternative sources of information; associational autonomy; and inclusive citizenship) are necessary to enable the people to control the agenda. (Dahl 1998, p.92).

The question is what does control of the agenda by the people mean? Dahl's description of the democratic process is summarized in the following paragraph.



## CHAPTER 1.

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Collective decisions made by the polity become binding for everyone after they are taken. However, the making of decisions is preceded by a process that comprises at least two stages: the first stage involves setting the agenda (i.e., identifying the issues that are to be resolved), and the second stage determines the outcome. The veto is possible in both stages - the issue can be blocked during the first stage, and certain decisions may be removed from the field of legitimate decisions. (Dahl, 1998, p. 107).

This process of collective decision making meets the democracy criteria only if it satisfies the requirement of effective participation:

"...Citizens ought to have an adequate opportunity and an equal opportunity for expressing their preferences as to the final outcome. They must have adequate and equal opportunities for placing questions on agenda and for expressing reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than other". (Dahl, 1989, p.109).

If citizens do not have the opportunity to participate in agenda setting in the first stage, certain interests may not be taken into account in the second stage. The second stage is when the decision is made and implies voting, which equally considers all citizens.

The right of citizens to put issues on the agenda should not only be equal but also exclusive. No external actors should share this right. The right to place issues on the agenda cannot be limited or restricted by anything or anyone – not by a dictator, not by the military, and not by any international organization. If the democratic sovereignty of the people is to be established, all issues that require collective decisions must belong to the demos.

The demos must have the exclusive opportunity to decide how matters are to be placed on the agenda, that are to be decided by means of the democratic process." (Dahl, 1989, p.113).

Thus, voting/elections are insufficient to make a decision-making process democratic. Full democracy requires that well-informed citizens equally and exclusively control this process at the agenda-setting stage.

In contrast to the ideal democracy, demos cannot participate in agenda setting in a polyarchy; influence by many does not mean participation by all. In a polyarchy, the agenda is formed by multiple – but not all – independent interests. Dahl empirically studied the influence of different interests on decision making in an American city (Dahl, 2005). Interest groups, through participation, force the elite to include the problems of the interest groups on the political agenda, thereby linking government policy to the needs of society. Consequently, no single entity has a monopoly over the agenda. Dahl

recognizes that economic inequality is associated with political inequality and that the wealthy elite have greater access to the agenda than the poor do (Dahl, 1989). Accordingly, polyarchy, which functions against a capitalist background, can never attain the perfect democratic ideal. Rule by many is better than rule by one or by a few (monarchy or oligarchy), but it will never become rule by all.

Dahl distinguishes between two dimensions of democracy. The first dimension comprises formally institutionalized and legally guaranteed rights and freedoms, including to participate in electing representatives; to freedom of expression, inquiry, discussion and deliberation in the broadest sense; to form associations with others for inquiry and political action; and the rights to and opportunities for citizenship, among others. The second dimension encompasses citizens' participation in political life through the exercise of these rights and freedoms (Dahl, 2000).

These two dimensions of democracy can be imagined as a set of negative and positive rights. Most negative rights are legally guaranteed, whereas the positive rights depend largely on the individual's will and confidence in the system. For example, an individual with no trust in the system might refrain from participating in elections. The crisis of modern representative democracy is precisely expressed by such distrust; despite broad support for the first dimension of democracy, citizens are becoming increasingly passive. They treat governments with distrust and dislike the manner in which governments function. This creates a paradoxical situation: although everyone desires democracy, people are becoming increasingly hesitant to use the benefits offered by it.

Although Dahl argues that the power to set the agenda should belong to the people, he clearly places this right in the second, informal dimension of democracy. Accordingly, the implementation of this power is a positive right and thus not guaranteed by legal arrangements. Therefore, it is logical to consider whether the democratic paradox described by Dahl can be explained as follows: informal rights are becoming increasingly difficult to implement; consequently, the governance agenda has become increasingly distant from citizens' desires. Given that the opportunity to influence the agenda is not ensured by formal institutions, is it possible that neoliberal globalization and technocracy have shaken the foundation of representative democracy to the extent that participation has become meaningless to the people? We will return to this issue later.

Even if one ignores the impact of inequalities that exist in real life, both aspects of the political process – normative evaluation and institutional implementation – are left with open questions in Dahl's interpretation.

The collective decisions regarding content that are made at the last stage of the democratic process must normatively represent the desire of “many”. However, to what extent must the principle of “many” influence agenda setting, even if it is possible? How desirable is it? How fair?

It is essential that once decided, the agenda is common for everyone. Demos are persistently characterized by numerous problematic issues that require political decision making. In what sequence should these issues appear on the agenda? Who should decide the sequence? Dahl bypasses this question – his answer is “all” – but this question is essential to us because the sequence of decision-making influences the final agenda and manifests power, which enables manipulation. Thus, the process by which the sequence is decided should be transparent and rules regarding the setting of the sequence must be established to ensure that the process has a democratic dimension.

The first possible solution to the problem of sequence is the following: priority should be given to the issues about which the majority of the people are worried, i.e., in a democratic context, priority should be given to solving the problems that seem most urgent and actual to the majority of the people. Indeed, institutions of polyarchy speak in favor of this solution. Presumably, numerous groups will be able to effectively communicate their problems and the winner of the election will be the political actor who has placed these problems at the forefront of their electoral campaigns.

Suppose we believe that the above-described reality is empirically relevant (which is doubtful because small but active “screaming” groups often have a greater impact on the agenda than the majority does). How desirable is this reality? If the first items on the agenda are always the issues most important to the majority, key dimensions of democracy – equality and efficiency – are likely to be inhibited.

If such a reality is implemented, then small, discriminated-against groups in society that are demanding recognition of their rights might never be able to get their issues on the agenda. There will always be other more important and pressing problems that require government attention and collective decision making. Thus, an agenda that is set according to the preferences of the majority might fail to take into consideration the qualitative difference among the problems of society. Certain problems of the minority – those related to the protection of their basic rights – may need to have priority over other problems. Thus, a discriminated-against minority should have normative supremacy over the majority until the problem of inequality is eliminated.

Democracy cannot be effective if the political space is devoid of novelty – new issues, approaches and ideas. Novelty usually emerges from the minority or

even from individuals. Leaders who have such new ideas need time and public space to promote these ideas. If new ideas always rank lowest on the political agenda merely because these ideas do not have a large number of supporters, the political reality may become extremely conservative and stagnant. Normatively, innovation must have an opportunity to rank higher than established political topics on the political agenda; otherwise, development will be inefficient.

These two examples show that the process of agenda setting cannot be subject to the same majoritarian rule that applies to decision making. In decision making, the quantity of votes is crucial, whereas in agenda setting, quantity is not the main or decisive measurement. A political decision is ideal if its content is acceptable to everyone or at least to a large majority, whereas an agenda formation process that favors minority problems may be more desirable and democratic than otherwise.

Agenda setting through the majority principle is not only undesirable but also impossible. Effective participation is not used equally by citizens; rather, its use depends on the intensity of a citizen's feelings regarding his situation. A minority facing extreme difficulties could become the most active political power. Thus, the agenda formation process is influenced not only by the scope of the problem but also by its severity.

Politicians who enjoy a representation mandate have virtually unlimited capacity to modify the agenda according to government needs. Mechanisms available to voters to influence such politicians are quite limited. Because the participatory institutions are informal, these institutions are placed in the space that exists between politics and society, which contains the media and civil society. It is believed that society creates the agenda through these institutions, which are taken into account by politicians. However, it is doubtful that voters have an influence on the public space and other civil society institutions. In addition to civil society institutions, the constitutional framework and the formal or informal powers of the elites are the mechanisms that form the final agenda. Thus, the common frustration of democracy - elected politicians who do not fulfill their promises - is not the result of a bad political elite but of the institutional characteristic of a real polyarchy, in which the agenda is controlled by the government, not by the people.

Two conclusions may be reached based on these two examples: first, Dahl is right to consider agenda setting a type of political power and not just a part of the decision-making procedure because the sequence of issues is essentially linked to their substance.

Second, Dahl does not understand the crucial importance of the sequence

of events, which explains why Dahl makes mistakes with respect to the normative aspects of agenda formation and is unable to develop institutional mechanisms that regulate the sequence of decision making. According to Dahl, citizen participation in agenda setting looks as a simultaneous similar to citizen participation in decision making, which creates the gap in his reasoning.

### *B. The will of the people is not an aggregate of individuals' preferences – deliberation*

The theory of deliberative democracy, which has evolved in recent decades, suggests another approach to overcome the social choice dilemma.

The deliberative approach is based on the notion that society is more than a set of individuals, and that the will of the people is manifested not in the aggregation of individuals' preferences but rather in horizontal communication and deliberation among individuals. Preferences can be modified through the process of communication, and a common ground that is considered by everyone to be the best decision may be identified.

“For deliberative democrats, the essence of democratic legitimacy is the capacity of those affected by a collective decision to deliberate in the production of that decision. Deliberation involves discussion in which individuals are amenable to scrutinizing and changing their preferences in light of persuasion (but not manipulation, deception, or coercion) from other participants. Claims for and against courses of action must be justified to others in terms they can accept.” (Druzek, 2003).

Empirically, deliberation can be seen in public space, civil society and parliamentary or judicial proceedings. However, the power relations that permeate all of these areas prevents the achievement of perfect equality. Perfect deliberation is not just any conversation but rather a method of communication that meets the strict normative criteria of equality and freedom. Everyone should have an equal opportunity to fully exercise their right to participate in the formation of the general opinion. However, strict adherence to these criteria would transform deliberation into an endless process.

Whereas the aggregation of preferences makes the political process appear similar to a market situation, deliberation is analogous to the forum (Elster, 1997). Thus, in the context of deliberation, the essence of "the political" is different: “politics . . . is concerned with the common good and notably with the cases in which it cannot be realized as the aggregate outcome of individuals pursuing their private interests” (Elster, 1997, p.4).

Supporters of deliberation claim that the deliberation process must be institutionalized to resolve shortcomings in electoral democracy. They believe that decisions based on deliberation will gain rational legitimacy, which is difficult to achieve through other mechanisms in biased partisan politics. The public nature of the process (which is lacking in voting) should limit selfishness and transform the aspirations of its members by promoting their political role as citizens rather than private individuals.

There are many varieties and theories of deliberation, all of which cannot be fully discussed here. There has also been a significant amount of criticism. Many authors argue that deliberation is a means of overcoming the paradox of impossibility theorems. Even if deliberation is not fully separated from voting but rather precedes it, the deliberative process will help to bring members' positions closer together. Thus, the basic axioms of Arrow's theorem would be fulfilled, and the impossibility theorems would be overcome (Dryzek, 2003). However, other authors maintain that deliberation will only escalate conflicts and increase the difficulty of reaching decisions.

In our opinion, the main problem with the comparison of deliberation and aggregation is that the two sides do not recognize the existence of the third component of the process.

The market, the forum and the combination of the two is how Elster views the three methods of political decision making. Because he finds shortcomings in first two methods, he prefers the third, mixed option. We argue that this option is not merely a compilation of the first two options but rather a third ideal-type method, which, along with the first two methods, participates in every real political process and is linked to the agenda-setting power dilemma. None of these three methods – not the market, the forum, or their combination – can solve the agenda-setting power inequality problem.

Assume that the political process comprises some combination of the forum and the market. Decisions made according to the market principle (based on the aggregation of private interests) confer power on the majority rather than minority. In contrast, decisions made according to the forum principle are acceptable to every member of the society (according to forum rules, if someone does not agree with the decision, then deliberation should continue).

Suppose an ideal situation exists in which society has an opportunity to exercise both aggregation and deliberation. Because deliberation is an endless process, these two principles should be used in sequence; specifically, well-analyzed and thoroughly discussed issues should move from the forum space to the voting space, where the decision will be made. This ideal situation raises several questions. Who will decide that the issue is ripe for a decision? How?

When? Who will set the decision-making agenda and put the issues to a public vote? How? When?

The majority principle should not be used for such decisions because it would make deliberation pointless. Conversely, if the “everyone” principle is used, the issues may never be resolved. This leaves one option: a minority or a person or a group has the power to regulate the agenda. Political decisions that create such a player represent the third, ideal type of power, which is capable of regulating the relationship between the forum and the market.

We assume that both deliberation and aggregation are components of the political process. This assumption has empirical and normative justifications because one principle is the product of the republican tradition and the other is the product of the liberal traditions. Both principles have normative value and empirical manifestation in modern democracies. However, these two principles, taken separately or together, cannot explain the need for agenda setting and individual initiative. Nonetheless, each principle highlights the need for these elements, although they do so differently. Aggregation, the market and public opinion show the specificity of this kind of governance and emphasize the specific role and place of the elite. Conversely, deliberative democracy democratizes agenda setting and equates it with the rights of “all” by allowing each individual to raise his issue in a simultaneous and egalitarian process of deliberation.

The three ideal types of cooperative decisions – decisions made by everyone, decisions made by the majority and decisions made by one individual,<sup>2</sup> – represent the constituent elements of the political process. By themselves, they create non-transitive values that are subject to the paradox of impossibility theorem. If our normative aspiration is to interlink these values in a non-dictatorial way according to the principles of democracy, each member must be equipped with no less than three rights: a) preference concerning the content of the decision to participate in the aggregation b) vision of the common good, to participate in deliberations and c) political outlook, to be able to prioritize the agenda. Thus, each member has three social roles: he is a private person, a citizen and a political subject.

Classical theories of democracy, both liberal and republican, maintain that the third role of the individual (political subject) represents a balance between his private and civil visions. If an individual has both needs and ideals, this is sufficient to establish a coherent relationship between them (i.e., an ideology), which will be his guide in the world of politics.

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<sup>2</sup> We refer here to cooperative games with minimal winning coalitions comprising all players, the majority or a single player.

Paradoxically, such determinism is supported in most mainstream politics. However, if one rejects the dialectics of being and conscience (which is implicit in this form of determinism), one must introduce a third variable, which is neither being nor conscience but rather a procedure that belongs to the area of the individual's vision, or subjectivity. Thus, it is necessary to return to the impossibility theorem paradox and search for a combination of the three in which none of them is the derivative of the other two.

In the modern world, such a vision of classical democracy (which is lacking this third component) should be seen as limited or outdated. An individual's political role and his political behavior should be understood as independent characteristics of his individuality, along with his needs and values. These three characteristics are connected, but not in a deterministic way.

### *C. Constitution, limited government, liberal democracy*

In previous sections, we did not separate the formal and informal areas in which political decisions are made. Political science separates the political system and its processes from a wider arena of power relations that surrounds the system. One can assume that this separation, which is a consequence of the formalization of constitutionally established political institutions, is the key to the relationship between popular will and agenda-setting power. The question of what is "political" in the given system at a given moment is itself a political problem associated with agenda setting.

In its modern sense, democracy is a term that describes a form of political arrangement. In the past, Alexis de Tocqueville used this term in a more holistic manner to distinguish between democratic nations and aristocratic nations, suggesting that democratic governance is inevitably linked to the nature of society and to its mores, social structure, feelings, and behaviors (Tocqueville, 2003). Today, no one would describe societies holistically by distinguishing between "democratic" and "nondemocratic" nations, not only because of political correctness but also because the term "democratic" has become closely associated with formal political systems.

Everything that occurs at the societal level is considered the background and arena for democracy, which is a feature of political culture that may be linked in various ways to the political system called democracy but is not a component of this political system. The political culture, social structure, and economic conditions of a society may strengthen or weaken its functioning, but these should be studied and considered separately.

Separating a political system from its social and economic background is



both normatively and methodologically important. Using the term "democracy" to describe a political system and its institutions has played an important role in the study and practice of democratization in recent decades. It has been said that any society, regardless of its history, political culture, or economic prosperity, can establish democratic governance if it accepts regular competitive and inclusive elections that encompass relevant rights and freedoms and are protected by the rule of law.

In its original concept, democracy is based on popular sovereignty and popular rule. When it becomes equivalent to a political system that has elections at its core, it comes close to the idea of majority rule. Conventionally, democracy is rule "by the people", directly or through representatives, and decisions in a democracy reflect the will of (at least) the majority of the population.

"Two very different ideas are usually confounded under the name democracy. The pure idea of democracy, according to its definition, is the government of the whole people by the whole people, equally represented. Democracy as commonly conceived and hitherto practiced, is the government of the whole people by a mere majority of the people, exclusively represented." (Mill, 1991, p.302).

Mill argued that under majoritarian rule, when there is a deep class division in a society, the minority class may be underrepresented and majority rule may in effect become tyranny. Concern regarding tyranny of the majority is familiar to all new democracies that have established more or less competitive elections and majority rule but nevertheless remain far from the ideals of equal representation and participation and good governance. Following classical concepts, the rule of law and human rights are considered the constraints that ensure that majority rule will not degenerate into a tyranny of the majority.

In essence, the principles of constitutional government, together with the principles of democracy, unite these two meanings of democracy (majority rule and sovereignty of all).

However, a crucial question arises: will the constitution and human rights represent a component of the popular will or a means of restricting this will? If the will of the people is closely identified with the will of the majority (and both are identified with democracy), then it follows that the constitution and human rights are given legitimacy and democracy is limited by them. This is the essence of liberal democratic approach.

From liberal point of view, a modern representative democracy is not merely a majority government but also a limited form of government. Its origins

lie in the belief that the best government does not represent the people's government in its purest form but rather is a blend of democracy, republic and monarchy, a combination of power of the few and power of the many (Montesquieu, quoted in Held, 2006, p. 67). The constitution, the supremacy of law and human rights limit the will of the majority and create the framework of politics. Procedures and the rules of the game have in large part been moved "outside" and do not represent direct components of political struggles.

If one shares this vision and agrees to limit the normative ideal (sovereignty of the people) due to practical (or normative) necessity, certain questions remain unanswered: To what extent and how do modern constitutions regulate agenda-setting power? Can modern constitutions overcome chaos without creating dictatorships?

Classical works on liberal constitutional democracy do not focus explicitly on the agenda-setting dilemma but legally regulate this process within the framework of system institutions. To some extent, this regulation is based not so much on the positive opportunity to raise issues (set the agenda) as on the power to block decisions - the veto. In addition to the vertical veto (people - government), which was discussed above and gives people the opportunity to peacefully change the government, this regulation creates horizontal vetoes within the system.

The constitutional mechanisms of power sharing and power distribution create an institutional system in which the consent of several key institutions (actors) is required to make decisions. The power to block decisions is called veto power (Tsebelis, 2002). Veto power, together with the power to raise issues and to affect the substance of decisions, comprise the power trio that constitute the decision-making cycle. This cycle is dynamic and distributed over time: first, the issue is raised and slated for discussion; then, the decision is made; and finally, veto power may be exercised. Clearly, this sequence is conditional; the potential use of veto power limits the field of legitimate initiatives, and decision making may be preceded by negotiations for a compromise.

Constitutionalism claims to separate game rules and procedure from the content and substance of political decisions, indicating that a constitution should have neutral values. The question is whether such a claim is realistic.

The constitutions of different countries arrange political systems – which comprise the three components described above – in different forms. The liberal tradition (Anglo-American) is inclined toward the distribution of power and limits on the will of the majority (thus protecting the negative rights of the minority). The republican tradition (continental Europe) tends toward power sharing and ensuring minority participation in agenda setting (thus supporting

the positive rights of the minority). A comparison of these two groups of countries reveals value bias in their constitutional arrangements. Does there exist an objective natural law, knowledge or value system that is not subject to the will of the people but rather stands above it? Conversely, can the differences among constitutions be explained by a specificity in the will of the people that is a driving force of society? Does a constitution solve the problem of chaos by giving preference to a particular hierarchy of values? If so, the system should be described as a limited type of democracy; “liberal” and “constitutional” are epithets that do not explain democracy but, together with “democracy”, they form a constellation that is immediately free of paradoxes.

Do constitutions limit popular will, or do they create opportunities to derive the rule of law and human rights from the will? The answer to this question lies not in the discussion/decision-making procedures pertaining to issues that have already been put on political agenda but rather in the demarcation between the political and the non-political. Centuries of domination by the liberal tradition generated a normatively defined demarcation between political and non-political spheres and a categorical demand to remove certain issues from the political agenda. Simultaneously, demands for an expanded agenda that includes banned or ignored topics has created a political battleground. What should be put on the political agenda, and what should remain in the private area in which individual decisions are made? In the realm of liberal constitutional democracy, this question creates a cleavage that represents deep ideological differences.

Consistent legal restriction of the political agenda may reach a point at which the majority is unable to place their interests on the agenda or to realize their positive rights, finding themselves in constant opposition to the government. Such a situation is equivalent to a minority government and may be called a democracy only nominally. In contrast, if the field of the political is infinitely extended, decision making will become difficult and government efficiency will be lost.

There are three types of political power involved in the political system and process: a. the power to raise an issue and place it in the realm of political consideration; b. the power to participate in the decision-making process and influence decisions; and c. the power to veto decisions and to block the issue entirely by removing it or some of its solutions from the field of the political. These types of power constitute the political system and the political process. They are inextricably interlinked with each other. They may exist latently or be poorly articulated and understood. In other words, the struggle between these three types of power requires the virtual and symbolic representation of politics,

where interpretations are made. This field is only partially located within the political system and is increasingly moving into the public space, where it is not regulated by the political system (Manin, 1997).

If one considers all three of these elements to be components of democracy, the symbolic battlefield between them may be called the field of representation. However, this definition may be confusing. Both representative and direct democracy require political articulation and discussion before decisions are made. We disagree with the authors who attribute the publicity of decisions and the need for preliminary hearings exclusively to representative democracy (according to Manin, in a representative democracy, public decisions undergo the trial of debate) (Manin, 1997, p. 17). Here and later, when we talk about representation, we often mean symbolic publicity (drawing a virtual picture), which is necessary/essential for both direct and representative democracies. Elective governance changes this picture in only one respect: it adds the element of particularism by transforming the actors (political leaders) into the subjects of the agenda, thereby making these actors the symbols of political interpretation.

Using mathematical modeling, we will show that these three traditions co-exist as elements of the unified democratic dynamic process, during which the will of the people develops over space and time as the unity of all three components, from issue raising to decision making to the veto. Thus, according to our model, the constitution and human rights represent components of democracy, not its restriction. They are derived from the general will, as opposed to restricting it from the outside.

However, neither constitutionalism nor human rights can ensure that a specific institutional polyarchy will function in full compliance with normative ideals. Moreover, given the existing institutional forms, it can be assumed that polyarchies are increasingly distant from these ideals.

Because majorities are flexible and their composition and programs change dynamically, it is quite possible that a certain segment of society (even a very small segment) could remain in the winning coalition in each subsequent election. If such a group exists, we will call it the dominant elite. There might also be a group (also small) that never achieves success and remains in the minority as a result of each election. We will call this group the discriminated-against minority. Neither the constitution nor human rights limit the existence of dominant elites and discriminated-against minorities in this society.

If there is a dominant elite and/or a discriminated-against minority in society, can the political system be called a democracy if it is based on all of the institutional characteristics of the liberal constitutional electoral regime? Even

if the possibility of chaos is excluded, what meaning should be attributed to this regime, given that it is highly stable, the needs of the majority are satisfied, and the minority is protected from the tyranny of the majority?

It is obvious that even in the medium term, the above-described situation is not the exception but rather the rule in electoral democracy. In this situation, the issues that are deemed appropriate for political status and are subject to collective decisions do not cover all issues but rather are limited to a field of socially, economically and culturally formed issues. In any society, there is a hierarchy of values that is quite stable and culturally specific. The power relations in this hierarchy go beyond the political framework and are structural, rather than systemic or institutional, in nature.

"The popular will" is not "communism", under which everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve the desired results. Democratic governance does not include the promise that justice will be fully implemented. Rich and powerful elites have recourses that increase their political influence. Structural power inequalities that exist in this society are a component of the social contract (popular will), not its alternative.

The political agenda, which within the framework of the political system is considered a result of a collective process, is formed by the power relations, which extend far beyond the reach of the constitution. Should one conclude that the stability of a constitutionally formed "democracy" depends on the historical environment in which it originated and developed? Can it be that the trajectory of social transformation leads to the point at which the constitutional regulation of power is insufficient to make the system work?

Moreover, has the moment already arrived in which representative logic is gradually replaced by the leadership logic? Has the power to set the agenda become more important than the satisfaction of median preferences?

### **The dynamic democracy**

In a contemporary post-modern and globalized world, the primary political problem is determining which problems are "political". What issues should be solved by political means, and who should make that decision, in an environment in which economic management is becoming increasingly technocratic, the sovereignty of the people has exceeded nation-state boundaries, the virtual public space has been globalized, and local and national powers are intertwined?

The liberal tradition, which conflates the notions of "the people" and "the

majority” and equates the concept of democracy with the concept of majority, has made it rather difficult to recognize that this vision of democracy represents not an empirical but rather a normative assertion. There has been a constant, centuries-long battle to make this proclamation a reality.

Liberal democracy protects the negative freedoms of the individual from the monarchy and from the dictatorship of the majority (Protective democracy, Held, 2006, p. 77). Liberal democracy incorporates positive freedom only as an expression of collective will, which is aggregated in elections.

”A core element of freedom derives from the actual capacity to pursue different choices and courses of action (“positive freedom”). This notion was not developed systematically by the liberal tradition we have considered . . .” (Held, p.78).

In this tradition, the public good is conceptualized as an aggregate of private goods.

The social choice theory included agenda setting in the overall picture of democracy, as procedural in nature, with no substantive affiliation with either the private or the public good; in this view, agenda setting is an element that establishes a relation between the private and the public. In contrast to this view, we give the agenda substantive as well as procedural meaning. The issues that come within social and political agendas acquire social and political relevance and develop into public goods. The agenda represents a non-aggregated form of public good. Competition for the power to control the agenda is a struggle to define the essence of the collective will of society. The discursive space of interpretations gives a diverse, pluralistic character to the relations between private preferences and public goods. The combination of these elements – multiple interpretations of private preferences, public goods and the relations between them, create democracy in the broadest sense, which develops over time and space and dynamically creates its own institutions, constitutions and rules of the game.

Uniting substance and procedure in one dynamic model is especially useful when there are significant institutional changes within the system. This unity helps to fix a problem of New Institutionalism, namely, its inability to explain the dynamics of institutional changes. An understanding of institutions and their meanings (interpretations) and the struggle to control the agenda create an opportunity to model systemic (institutional) changes. However, because the interpretation of private preferences is made against a background of non-aggregated common good, the model is transformed from institutional to structural in nature.

Political decisions, beginning with voting and ending with the adoption of laws, is not determined by formal political institutions. These decisions are also conditioned by the meanings that are formed in the public space. The political system itself acquires its meaning through public discourse, which in turn determines its efficiency, stability and manner of functioning. Manipulating and influencing meanings are essential factors in the manner in which institutions function and transform.

In Georgia, whose political system was formed as a result of such institutional changes, interpretation has a central place in politics. The struggle between competing interpretations creates a highly polarized, populist and negativist political process.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Three Ideal Types of Politics and Their Mathematical Modeling: The Case of Georgia

*Marina Muskhelishvili, Ivane Kechakhmadze*

#### **Spatial modeling of political competition and its current shortcomings**

There was a time when people believed that the earth was flat and rested upon the backs of three elephants. The analysis of empirical reality led humanity to abandon the flat-earth model, and today we know that the world is round. In our opinion, this kind of discovery needs to become the agenda of social choice theory. In social choice theory, a plane is used as the base model of society and the three intransitive values that are at the core of Arrow's impossibility theorem resemble the three elephants, forming a base to support the stability of society. The comprehensive mathematical apparatus that has developed over decades within the framework of this theory has aimed to find conditions that strengthen the stability of this fragile situation.

“The spatial theory of elections is based on the premise that the policy positions of voters and candidates can be represented by points in an issue space and that a voter's evaluation of a candidate's policy positions is measured by the distance between the voter and the candidate in this space. If candidates have spatial mobility, the purpose of the theory is to predict where each candidate will locate in the issue space if he wishes to win the election.” (Enelow, 1989).

In the previous chapter, we stated that the theorems of impossibility prove that the ideal of democracy, in which the people do not merely control the governors but actually govern, is unachievable in theory. This statement is probably slightly exaggerated. The theoretical argument about democracy and its mathematical modeling is similar to the argument over the chicken and the egg. A mathematical model gives one an opportunity to verify theoretical views. However, the model is itself a theory that is necessarily based on assumptions and axioms of a theoretical character. If these assumptions are empirically irrelevant, then the plausibility of the model is questionable.

In this chapter, we aim to introduce a new model of society and to develop



an approach that is based on an assumption that the world (society) is round.<sup>1</sup> The horizon of one's area of vision is an imaginary line of infinity that may be crossed. When a round society is projected onto a flat plane, we get a representation of society rather than the real society, in which distances between points depend on the type of projection. Individuals of society are considered to have their own preferred versions of representation (projection), which allows them to influence agenda setting. We believe that this model solves the problem of democracy because the distribution of agenda-setting power among the members of society makes manipulation of the agenda impossible.

The existing models of voting behavior apply Euclidean space equipped with coordinate axes that correspond to the political preferences continuum of voters toward some political issue. The political position of the voter is plotted at the point at which the Cartesian coordinates accord to his preferences. The voter has a rational capacity to compare his position to those of the other voters or to that of the electoral subject. The measure of this comparison is the Euclidean distance between two points. The closer the points are to each other, the closer the political views. Probabilistically, the voter would be disposed to vote for the closest candidate rather than for a competing candidate whose position is farther away from his own. For the voter who considers the preferences represented by different axes to be independent of each other, all candidates whose positions are equidistant from the voter's position (in terms of circumference, with the voter's position at the center) are equally acceptable or unacceptable (i.e., they have equal utility to the voter). Accordingly, the rational political actor who desires to win the majority vote will aim to minimize these distances and try to occupy the political position that will garner the largest number of votes.

The utility of the candidate to the voter is not the distance between their respective positions but rather the specific function of this distance, which is called the utility function. The function between the candidate and the voter is symmetrical, in that the candidate also evaluates the distance from the voter, which is equal to his benefits in the voter's eye. Indeed, the utility functions are taken to be linear. For example, for the voter  $v$  who is situated on a two-dimensional plane  $(X, Y)$ , the most elementary (linear) utility function for the  $k$  candidate would be:

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<sup>1</sup> Society may be characterized as having any curvature that opens the door to a more comprehensive usage of non-Euclidean geometry in the modeling of a society. In this volume, we do not go too far in this direction.

$$u(k,v)=a+b||k,v|| \quad (1)$$

where  $b < 0$ ; therefore, the greater the distance, the lower the utility.

This simple view is the first block in the field of mathematical modeling of voting behavior, which has developed increasingly comprehensive theorems and theories to overcome the disconnect between the model and the reality. According to the model, a rational candidate should turn toward the center; however, empirically, candidates tend to take positions far from the center instead of adopting centrist tendencies. Whenever the dimensions are more than one, this model of elections is disposed to predict chaos, which is not observed in practice. To overcome these phenomena, assumptions must be added to the model. For example, the probability that a voter will vote for the candidate depends not only on the closeness of the candidate's policy position but also on how certain or uncertain the voter is about the placement of the candidate's position. To correct the model, additional assumptions are necessary to predict the voter's nonpolitical dispositions (e.g., the beliefs and party membership of the voter and the valence of the candidate).

The improved substantiation of the model and the methods of its improvement do not alter the foundational block on which the model stands; rather, the identification of the voter's policy position using the Cartesian coordinates (with the point in multidimensional space) and the determination of political behavior (voting) using the function of Euclidean distance from the political subject remain within these sophisticated theorems as building blocks. To modify the block, it is necessary to analyze the essence of the voting space: the nature of the points that represent voters.

To conduct this analysis, we must take into consideration the difference between the positive interests of individuals (the facts of real world, the signified) and their political views, the signifiers, which are the represented and interpreted facts of the political world.

In representative democracy, the voter does not make decisions himself but rather chooses a political leader or party to act in his name. In this sense, the leader signifies policies, programs and electoral promises. In addition, representative democracies involve representation by signs and symbols. The articulation of policies, programs and promises is itself a symbolic act, such that the voter chooses not the signified but the signifier that he finds most desirable. The entire system of institutions of formal and informal communication and representation operates between the elected and the voter and attaches a specific meaning to the voter's choice.

The political (public) space that contains publicly articulated

proclamations, decisions, programs and debates is the territory in which these kinds of meanings are structured. The subjects of this space (politicians, activists and journalists), as well as its consumers (voters), participate in the process of coding and decoding these meanings with various messages and symbols. In this process, the transformation of an individual's demands into an articulated interest does not occur automatically; rather, it depends on the power process by which the agenda for public space is set. The processes of interpreting interests, grouping interests and connecting the interests to political decisions is also power-driven.

Even when the underlying conditions are ideally democratic (i.e., everybody has equal rights and opportunities to participate in the formation of the agenda for the representative space), it is known in advance that out of a multitude of issues, the political agenda will include only a finite number of them.

“But no society and its institutions can attend to more than a few issues at a time. The resource of attention in the news media, among the public, and in our various public institutions is scarce” (McCombs. 2004. p. 38).

Regardless of a “capacious” and multidimensional public space and the breadth of the spectrum of political actors, there will be condensing, eliminating and grouping of themes. In the process of their transition into the political space, a portion of demands will not find their symbolic public equivalent, whereas others will be transformed into symbols that correspond not to one but to many thematic preferences. The most general form of these symbolic representatives are political ideologies; the most condensed and overarching symbols form one-dimensional axes of representation (e.g., conditionally right-wing – left-wing).

Thus, in a real democracy, every issue is not equally present in the political space. Not only the public space is a “limited resource,” the government itself also cannot devote an equal amount of attention to every possible problem. Between elections (i.e., during the ruling period), the democratic authority manages to realize a finite number of decisions. Thus, it is important for the voter to know not only the policy positions of the candidates but also the issues prioritized by each candidate. In a real democratic political system, representation is limited, and the determination of issues that will be submitted to decision-making may itself become a political issue.

The reduction of multiple issues to one or a small number of themes in the process of representation necessitates the formation of symbols that simultaneously correspond to several (many) independent factors (variables).

Any form of visible political phenomenon – including political ideology, leaders, symbols, slogans, action programs, the direction of development and the flag — may acquire symbolic meaning as a means of interlinking two or more independent factors through a mutual interpretation. For example, regardless of the agenda for development – whether it be “building communism,” “integration into the European Union,” “progress” or “the creation of a large society” – all of these symbols yield a generalized interpretation of every concrete theme that troubles society. Nevertheless, there are often multiple interpretations of each symbol, which we will discuss next.

In summary, whenever the “political” is modeled as an electoral space, this space contains represented politics, which is a one-shot slice of the process of symbolic representation with a finite number of dimensions. The axes used to model the spectrum of political preference are few (as a rule, two is sufficient). The axes are formed socially and publicly and represent the result of a collective process. Not everybody has an equal say in this space. It is possible that there are individuals for whom politically significant issues are symbolized using completely different dimensions on axes that do not have much public support. Those who are left behind are excluded from the political agenda; for example, those who favor absolute monarchy will surely be unable to find their dimension in the political discourse of modern democracy. Therefore, monarchists’ participation in elections is conditioned on their ability to find a complementary representative within the existing agenda. This necessitates making comparisons and finding correspondent policies on another axis. To remain involved in current politics, an individual is forced to link issues that are important to him to issues that are discussed publicly. This work requires the voter to establish connections and interpretations between different political issues. The voter’s position on the electoral plane is the result of this process; in other words, the position of the voter – his corresponding point – is not the voter himself but the interpretation of his preferences against dimensions (axes) that are not determined by him.

Even if he is not an activist, the ordinary voter is more than a static object of politics. Rather, the voter resembles an equilibrium of a local (individual) statistical distribution of preferences. The voter forms his position with respect to an agenda that has been formed by other people, which requires him to self-represent and self-interpret himself against this agenda until he finds an acceptable political position and, ultimately, a candidate. To perform this process, the voter must possess the abilities to compare different issues, to recognize the alternatives and to determine his own priorities. In other words, the voter must be capable of interpretation and of agenda setting. Using these

capabilities, the voter not only determines his preferences but also creates a hierarchy of preferences based on his individual interests and values and on his vision of causal links. His position on the electoral plane is thus the function of his personal views, which are conditioned not only by a finite set of preferences but also by the hierarchy of these preferences.

The above also applies to political actors, with the following difference: whereas the reasons for the voter's position are latent and can be judged only through a sociological survey or polling, the reasons behind the position of the political actor are seen (must be seen) in public. The link between the policy preferences of the political actor and his preferred agenda is expressed in discourse.

In modeling voter behavior, all of these factors are not fully considered. Agenda setting, as a specific type of political power, is widely used when studying collegiums, wherein strategic games are played by limited number of political actors. Quite oddly, in the research on the functioning of mass democracy and on elections, the main democratic subject - the voter - is discussed in a somewhat limited political role. The voter is characterized only by his preferences within an agenda set by others; he evaluates the specific outcome of the political process but does not participate in this process and is unable to influence its outcome.

The data used to study voter behavior are similar in nature. Sociological questionnaires that define respondents' positions in the process of researching voter behavior can also be considered an agenda set by others. Any closed question contained within the survey represents an agenda (set by the researcher) and an interpretation (which is indicated by the menu of available options for the answer). Thus, in reality, preferences chosen by the voter during a survey or an election must be understood not as pre-political (i.e., a positively existing need) but as his self-representation in the space that is offered to him by the political situation.

The chaos theorem ably demonstrates why a model in which the modeled voters lack an opportunity to influence the agenda is inadequate. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the chaos theorem holds that the voter who has no power to set the agenda may become the subject of manipulation by those who do have this power. If the agenda is created not by society but by the political elite, the chaos theorem claims the impossibility of democracy.

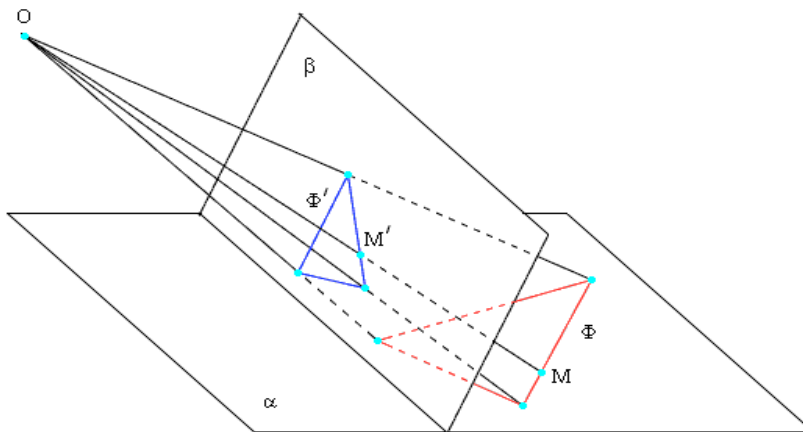
By considering voters as more comprehensive political subjects, we have the opportunity not only to overcome the paradox of chaos but also to explain other discrepancies between the model and empirical reality. The voters in our model have policy preferences, agenda preferences and the ability to compare one to the other.

### **The New Model: Combined Modeling of Preferences, Agenda and Interpretation**

To transition to a new model, we must change certain traditional assumptions. We stay within the framework of rational choice theory and consider competition for the majority of votes based on aggregation to be the institutional rule of the game. However, the voters are given additional political characteristics that are absent from the traditional model. These characteristics are voter preferences regarding the agenda and the individual capacity for interpretation. The voter's field of rationality increases as a result of these additional characteristics; now, he can answer not only the question of "what," but also the questions of "how" and "why."

Mathematically, the addition of these characteristics necessitates modifications to the axioms of the mathematical model: a transition from the Euclidean space to the projective space. As we stated above, we equate representation with the projection, the model unit, individual (with the additional qualities) with a self-represented symbol of the individual and the projective plane with the area of the represented politics.

Figure 2.1: Projection of the plane in the projective transformation

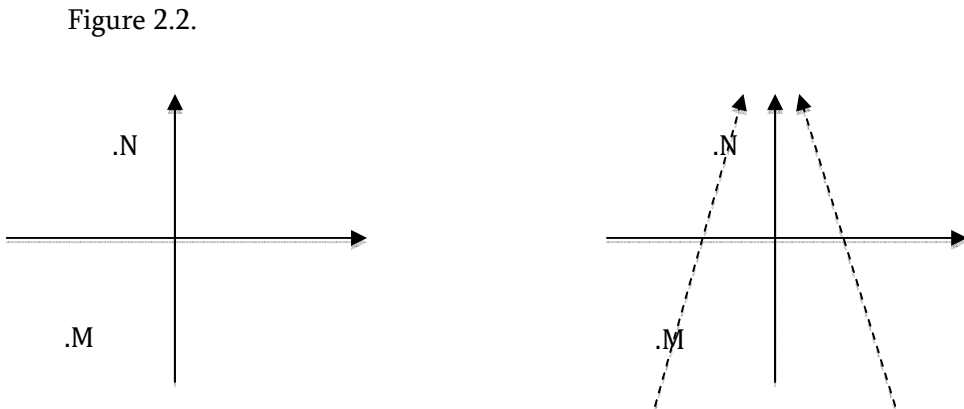


The main difference between the Euclidean and projective spaces can be described as follows: Euclidean geometry describes geometrical objects as they

are, whereas projective geometry describes the objects as they seem to be. Thus, when modeling politics represented in the public space, it seems more appropriate to use the projective space rather than the Euclidean space. The empirical data that are used to model electoral behavior are themselves relevant to the projected voter because these data give us the idea of politics from the perspective of the respondents themselves.

The difference between the use of Euclidean and projective spaces to model politics is geometrically visible and easy to grasp in the next figure.

If we stay on a traditional Euclidean plane, the political positions that correspond to points M and N differ in terms of preferences, as modeled by the OX (horizontal) and OY (vertical) axes (figure 2.2). However, if we consider perspective, we can imagine the line that passes through these two points is parallel to the OY-axis and crosses this axis on the imaginary horizon. Then, these two points are differentiated only in terms of the Y coordinate:



If the M and N points are occupied by political actors (leaders or parties), then in the first case, the voter will assume that the positions of the actors differ with respect to both the first and the second axis, whereas in the second case, the voter will see the difference between the positions expressed by the OY axis and will assume that the actors' positions regarding the preferences represented by the OX axis are equal to each other.

Therefore, on a projective plane, knowing the places of two points is insufficient to determine the distances between the preferences represented by these points. It is also necessary to know the geometry of the plane (the metrics) and "the viewpoint" from which this distance is judged by the subjects.

In Euclidean geometry, the distance between two points is invariant for

every transformation of coordinates; thus, distance can be used to compare and contrast subjects' political positions (points). The autonomy of the Euclidean subject is guaranteed by his ability "to measure the distance" and to occupy a particular position based on this information.

In projective geometry, the distance between two points is not invariant under projective transformations. Rather, this distance depends on the "point of view" (in layperson's terms, a comparison between two political positions necessitates knowing not only their respective locations but also the interpretation of the imaginary reality in which the positions are placed). That measure, which is invariant with respect to the point of view, is "cross-ratio" of distances, which is based not on two points but on the interrelation among four collinear (located on a single line) points.

To explain the mathematical model, we first compare it with the traditional, one-dimensional, left-right view. Then, we will proceed to the two-dimensional plane.

### **Introducing Projective Coordinates**

Modeling the political spectrum on one dimension, with right-wing political dispositions placed at one extreme and left-wing dispositions placed at the opposite extreme, is traditional in both political theory and political practice. Like voters, political parties and leaders can be distributed on a one-dimensional scale using this model. In the center are more centrist dispositions. Away from the center, more radical left-wing and right-wing positions will be occupied. The distance between two positions on this line shows the closeness or remoteness of these positions. Probabilistically, the voter is expected to vote for the political party or politician whose position is closest to his position.

The distribution of voters on this political plane ought to condition the results of elections, as well as the electoral strategies — the attempts to capture the position that will yield the most votes — of political actors.

If the distribution of voters is so-called normal, meaning that most voters are located at the center, then the most winnable position is also at the center (the median voters' theorem). The political actor that occupies the center position will be able to attract votes from both the left and the right and will beat any other candidate who diverges at all from the center. The Downsian principle is based on this observation and maintains that centrist tendencies will be observed in electoral democracies. Parties who compete to win elections must move away from the periphery and toward the center; otherwise, they



will lose to other, more instinctual competitors. Therefore, ideological differences will vanish and the main political parties are forced to mimic each other with respect to the preferences that they represent.

In this kind of model, the distance between finite points is more critical than the direction; it is assumed that lines' virtual ends (or end, because if we assume that the line originates from the projection of a circumference, the ends unite at an infinite point) do not play a role in electoral behavior. Given two preferences  $x_1$  and  $x_2$ , voter  $x$  chooses the preference that is closer to him,  $x_1$  (figure 2.3.).

Figure 2.3.



Note that the point of infinity in this model is not meaningless; rather, it represents cleavage, or the source of the agenda against which all preferences on this line are set. The names we assigned to the infinite ends of the line (left and right) determine where various political positions are placed on it; the infinite point where these ends join each other represents the cleavage. If the political spectrum is interpreted differently (for example, radicals vs. moderates, liberals vs. conservatives, globalists vs. localists, etc.), the placement of voters and actors on this line would be different, and the agenda would change.

By re-interpreting the agenda against which the preferences are set, we can turn any finite point into the cleavage (which previously was at infinity). Any position on this line (a point) can be transformed into a source of this kind of interpretation if it acquires the meaning of agenda. For example, we can easily imagine a situation in which cleavage is at the point of status quo on this line. If the situation is ideological, the ends of the line – “ideologies” or the “agenda of development” – start to exert significant influence on electoral behavior. In this case, it is possible that the political issue is formulated in general terms based on a perspective, whereas the voter chooses the direction. Then, the situation becomes different. The zero point (status quo) attains the meaning of cleavage at which right and left voters vote differently. The dynamics and the future vision become decisive, which means that voters pay attention to the direction of change and to its intensity. Voters vote for an actor according to his placement relative to the cleavage point; if the actor is on the opposite side of the cleavage point, the voter will not vote for that actor regardless of the distance between the voter and the actor. In this dynamic case, the main role is played by the infinite ends of the line as factors of measurement

of the political future. The farther the candidate is from the center, the more attractive he is to those voters who share his ideology. In this case, voter  $x$  votes for  $x_2$  even though  $x_1$  is closer to him (figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4.



Finally, if the voter operates with both logics, his outcome position represents their combination, that is, the balance ratio. For example, if the issue of lower taxes is raised in the political agenda, the voter's political choice on this axes may be a balance between the policy that promotes his personal interests in the short term and the policy that is consistent with his ideological position regarding the economic/social development of the country.

Thus, the voter's behavior depends on the meaning he attaches to political propositions; in turn, this meaning depends on the "metrics," or utility measure, applied by him. Either the factor of "closeness" (preference) or the intensity of deviation (cleavage) could prevail in the formation of this behavior; alternatively, the meaning may be holistically valued using the ratio between them (preference interpreted against the agenda set by cleavage).

The behavior of the political actor now includes both centripetal and centrifugal trends, depending on conflicting interpretations. When politics is extremely ideological, the situation becomes unstable. The voter's choice is determined by the ends of the infinite line, specifically, the imaginary "left wing" and "right wing" as symbolic interpreters of the situation. The political actor located in the central cleavage point is not attractive but instead is meaningless because he does not relate to any of these symbols. Divergence from the cleavage point to either side becomes necessary for the candidate of elections because the intensity and the direction of this divergence makes him understandable to voters in terms of the future.

We allowed two different interpretations of the elements of the basic space (points). It is now possible to interpret any finite or infinite point as both a preference and a cleavage. Thus, the difference between finite and infinite points on the line is gone. The meaning of the point that will prevail depends on interpretation, which is within the sphere that may be influenced by voters. Therefore, our model retains the axioms of rational choice theory while simultaneously gaining flexibility, which gives subjects the additional

dimensions of freedom of interpretation and informality. The candidate's position is evaluated by voters not only by means of one clearly defined political measurement (the distance) but also through the interpretation of this distance in the contexts of individual and public agendas. Our next task is to find the mathematical model that corresponds to this new model.

We use precise terminology, which is a necessity in this endeavor. Next, the terms for the preferences and the cleavage will be used in conjunction with the metric characteristics ascribed to the political position. Whenever there is discussion about policy preference (preference for short), we will always be referring to the interpretation of the political position from which the voter evaluates the distance to himself, whereas discussions regarding cleavage involve deviation from the point of cleavage (the reciprocal of distance). To underline this specific meaning of cleavage, we occasionally use the term “radical cleavage” to distinguish it from the ordinary meaning of cleavage, which refers to the position between two alternative choices when there is an equal probability of choosing either one.

Because our vision assigns political meaning to the imaginary point of infinity, it is logical to add this point to the set of political preferences. The projective line (and plane) on which our model is based represent an extended Euclidean line; in the case of one dimension, we add one point, whereas in the case of two dimensions, the line created by the points is at infinity.

As a matter of prior observation, we can translate all of this reasoning into a formula. Specifically, the political views of the  $x$  voter, which represents both centrifugal and centripetal tendencies, takes the following form:

$$f(x) = \frac{ax + b}{cx + d}$$

where  $ad - bc \neq 0$ . Thus, this is the formula of projective transformation.

This pre-discussion shows that if we introduce an agenda into the model, a new phenomenon emerges: instead of a linear utility function, we obtain a linear fractional transformation. It appears that there are points of attraction and points of repulsion. The importance of points of repulsion – in addition to their link to the notion of agenda setting – is that they can be used to interpret the strategic behavior of voters. The voter votes not only because he is attracted to specific offers but also because he wants to avoid undesirable alternatives. His choice is mediated between the desirable and the undesirable, as if he is formed by not one but two orientations of action.

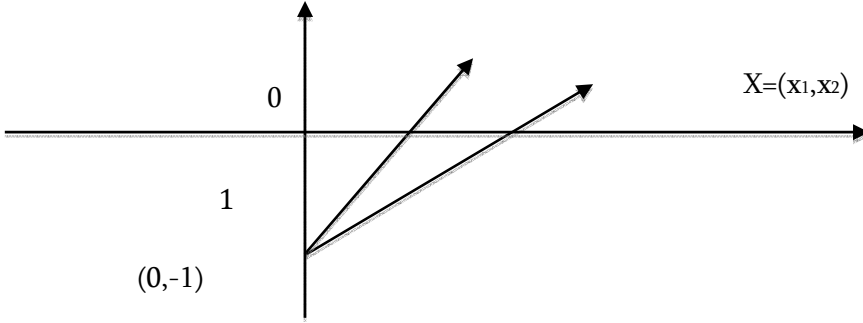
### Projective Coordinates

To build a new model, the Euclidean line comprising finite points is given a point at infinity and projective coordinates are introduced. With new homogeneous projective coordinates, the point at which the Cartesian coordinate  $x$  was previously located obtains a pair of coordinates  $(x_1, x_2)$ , where  $x = x_1/x_2$ . Homogeneous coordinates are attributed both to finite points and to the point at infinity, where  $x_2 = 0$ . Two pairs of coordinates that differ from each other only in terms of a constant multiplier,  $(x_1, x_2)$  and  $(ax_1, ax_2)$ , correspond to the same point.

The implication is that these coordinates,  $x_1$  and  $x_2$ , independently of each other, correspond to two types of voter orientations (the preference and the agenda). The first coordinate expresses the voter's preference regarding the central point, whereas the second coordinate expresses his preference regarding the point at infinity. Their fraction expresses the voter's interpretation, that is, their relative importance to the voter, which corresponds to the voter's position on the line. Because each coordinate is independent, a change in one is possible without a change in the other, which causes displacement of the position of voter  $X$  with respect to zero or to infinity. If, in absolute values,  $x_1$  is less than  $x_2$ , such that the voter's distance from the center is less than 1, the voter is characterized by more centrist tendencies; otherwise, the reverse is true. For the voter placed at point 1, the powers of attraction and repulsion are balanced.

Geometrically, we can see this kind of line better on a two-dimensional plane, where the horizontal axis represents the first coordinate of the point and the vertical axis represents the second. On the vertical axis, let us fix the point  $x_2 = -1$  and draw a ray on it that crosses the first axis at the point where coordinate  $x = x_1/x_2$ . Then, the point on the horizontal line at which the homogeneous coordinates  $X = (x, 1)$  will have a one-to-one correspondence with the ray, which goes through this point and the  $(-1, 0)$  point and whose slope coefficient is equal to  $1/x$ . The pencil of rays with origins at point  $(-1, 0)$  will have one-to-one correspondence with the points of the horizontal line. Furthermore, the point at infinity corresponds with the horizontal ray and has coordinate  $(1, 0)$  (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5.



The specificity of the projective line is as follows: it can be imagined as either a set of points or a pencil of lines. In the homogeneous coordinates, the points and lines correspond with each other; the point is simultaneously a line and the line - point. The coordinate of the  $v$  point on the line is simultaneously the inverse of the slope coefficient of that line. This geometric portrayal clarifies the two-sided nature of each point as both a preference and a cleavage line.

When the coordinates of the point are homogenous, their transformation takes the following form. Homogenous coordinates transform into new coordinates through the following linear transformation:

$$\begin{aligned} y_1 &= ax_1 + bx_2 \\ y_2 &= cx_1 + dx_2 \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

where the determinant is not equal to zero. Later, we will mean that the determinant of the transformation is normalized:  $ad-bc = 1$ .

Instead of homogenous coordinates, we mainly use nonhomogeneous coordinates, which are created from the homogenous coordinates by a homographic (linear fractional) transformation.

$$f(x) = \frac{ax+b}{cx+d} \quad (3)$$

where  $ad - bc \neq 0$  and every coefficient is a real number.

These types of coordinates represent projective coordinates; the transformation is called projective as well.

In this group of homographic transformations, the projective coordinates are transformed into projective coordinates. Each homographic transformation is fully defined if its meanings are defined by any three collinear (located on a

single line) points (in the case of projection, which we will discuss next) or by three coefficients out of four in its formula. For example, for the above formula, these may be  $f(\infty) = a/c$ ,  $f(0) = b/d$ ,  $f(1) = (a+c)/(b+d)$ .

If points on the line have Cartesian coordinates, they can also be uniquely defined by their projected coordinates, which are derived from the Cartesian coordinates through homographic transformation (the reverse is also true). If we know the projective coordinates, we can obtain a point's Cartesian equivalent (with the addition of the infinite point) by reversing the linear fractional function. In the special case in which  $c = 0$  in the formula of transformation, the transformation is affine.

Let us assume that  $x$  is the coordinate of the point in the initial coordinate system, which identifies points zero, infinity and 1 (which is the point at which  $x_1 = x_2$ , such that the tendencies toward and away from the center are balanced). With the projective transformation, it is possible to change the coordinates of the points such that zero and infinity become the coordinates of any finite A and B points, and the point at infinity acquires coordinates with finite meaning.

The important change that is introduced by this kind of transformation is that the role of cleavage is no longer played by the point at infinity, as it was earlier, but rather by any chosen finite point B, which had the old coordinate  $-d/c$ , whereas the new nonhomogeneous coordinate is equal to infinity. Analogously, 0 could be brought about in A, which previously had the coordinate  $-b/a$ . The possibility of this kind of transformation indicates that any point on the projective line can take two different meanings: that of preference or that of the cleavage. On the projective line, finite and infinite points are the same.

The projective transformation changes the coordinates of points on the line in a manner that alters not only the differences between them but also the ratios of the differences. A difference depends on interpretation; the interpretation depends on where the transformation places two more points, which play the role of milestones. It is necessary to introduce a new measurement of orientation on the projective line that is invariant of the projective transformation, which changes the nominal meaning of the coordinates. The cross ratio provides this kind of measurement.

Homographic (projective) transformations have a given property such that the cross ratio of four points is invariant against these transformations.

For any four points on the line A, B, C and D, the following formula expresses their cross ratio:

$$(A, B, C, D) = \frac{CA}{CB} \times \frac{DB}{DA} \quad (4)$$

In coordinates:

$$(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4) = \frac{x_1 - x_3}{x_2 - x_3} \times \frac{x_2 - x_4}{x_4 - x_1} \quad (5)$$

$$(\infty, 0, k, x) = x / k \quad (6)$$

$$(\infty, 0, 1, x) = x \quad (7)$$

In the special case in which the projective transformation leaves infinity at infinity, the transformation represents ordinary affine transformation:

$$u(x_4) = (\infty, x_2, x_3, x_4) = \frac{x_2 - x_4}{x_2 - x_3} \quad (8)$$

Formula (5) explicitly shows how the coordinates of points change during homographic transformation:  $x_1$ ,  $x_2$  and  $x_3$  relate to infinity, zero and one, respectively, for  $x_4$ .

The important properties of a projective transformation are captured by the fixed points of this transformation, namely, the points where  $u(x)=x$ .

This transformation may have two fixed points. These points may be real and different, coincident (one point) or imaginary, because they correspond to the roots of the quadratic equation:

$$\frac{ax+b}{cx+d} = x, \quad cx^2 + (d-a)x - b = 0 \quad (9)$$

Based on the number of fixed points (two real, one doubled and two imaginary), we will describe the transformation as hyperbolic, parabolic or elliptic, respectively (in the case of a normalized discriminant, these three cases correspond to the coefficients  $a+d > 2$ ,  $a+d = 2$  and  $a+d < 2$ , respectively).

The modeling of representation with projective coordinates is an important development. There appear to be three types of representation. These types become more visible when we transform the line into a plane, changing it from a one-dimensional distribution of preferences to a two-dimensional distribution. Using two dimensions, we will show the link between the type of representation and its discursive meaning.

## Two Dimensions

There are two different methods to extend a one-dimensional case to two dimensions. The first method allows  $x$  in formula (3) to take complex meanings and considers the two-dimensional complex plane to be a representation of the Riemann sphere obtained by Mobius transformation. The second method applies plain projective geometry to increase the number of dimensions of the space to two or more. For this model, the second approach is chosen, for two reasons: first, the model is flexible in terms of the number of dimensions. Second, the model is based on the assumption that all geometrical objects (points, lines and planes) in the model have meanings that are already represented in politics. The model does not address transformations of the initial sphere (society); it only addresses transformations of representations that form a group of projective transformations. Before we introduce a system of projective coordinates on a plane, the following four elements should be emphasized:

1. The points placed at infinity, which earlier were not taken into consideration, acquire political significance in this case. Specifically, these points symbolize cleavage, which creates the agenda. The voters who earlier “couldn’t distinguish” between inner and outer or between now and then and who mainly determined relations with each other through politics can now recognize the “infinity” and thus connect the inner and the outer, the present and the future, interest and ideology, and value and development. It is precisely these views that can create major political contradictions (cleavage), which is expressed by the homographic transformation of the point at infinity into the finite one.

2. In the projective plane, the coordinates of the represented individual are insufficient to determine his political profile. This point is a function of several individual parameters that are not known in advance. However, we can (and will) assume that the individual knows his own function and can operate with it. Through a sequence of several homographic transformations, the individual can also compare his view regarding, for example, the program offered by a political actor to the views of others on this subject. Knowing one’s function protects individuals from cognitive dissonance (i.e., the inability to make a logical connection between two different political decisions).

3. Like voters, political actors have particular outlooks (their specific functions of homographic transformation), with one difference: the system of political actors’ views is public and known to the voters. Geometrically, the candidate can be imagined as a point not on the electoral plane but above it



(this concept will be used later to better visualize the geometry of transformation). The candidate does not place himself vertically on the electoral plane in a Cartesian projection, he applies the homogenous transformation (the projection) of that imaginary plane, which allows the candidate to express the function of his mode of representation.

4. An actor's rational strategy includes not only choosing the best projective point (placement) on a plane but also choosing the homogenous transformation that will yield the most votes.

As in the one-dimensional case, the projective coordinates on the two-dimensional plane are introduced by completing the Euclidean plane with the line at infinity and the introduction of homogeneous coordinates  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$ , where  $(x/z, y/z, 1)$  are the coordinates of ordinary finite points and  $z = 0$  corresponds to the points of the line at infinity.

As in the one-dimensional case, homogeneous coordinates on the plane will be transformed through a system of linear equations:

$$\begin{aligned}x' &= a_1x + b_1y + c_1z \\y' &= a_2x + b_2y + c_2z \\z' &= a_3x + b_3y + c_3z\end{aligned}\tag{10}$$

or in new nonhomogeneous coordinates:

$$\begin{aligned}x'/z' &= \frac{a_1x + b_1y + c_1z}{a_3x + b_3y + c_3z} \\y'/z' &= \frac{a_2x + b_2y + c_2z}{a_3x + b_3y + c_3z}\end{aligned}\tag{11}$$

Accordingly, the expression  $a_3x + b_3y + c_3z = 0$  is the line at infinity, which represents the cleavage.

In homogeneous coordinates, this transformation takes the following form:

$$\begin{aligned}x' &= \frac{a_1x + b_1y + c_1}{a_3x + b_3y + c_3} \\y' &= \frac{a_2x + b_2y + c_2}{a_3x + b_3y + c_3}\end{aligned}\tag{12}$$

The projective coordinates that result from the transformation could also be considered ordinary Cartesian coordinates on a Euclidean plane.

To classify the projective transformations, we select a pair comprising one

point and one line on this Euclidean plane (the point (0,0) and the line at infinity). The unit circle around the central point represents the equilibrium set of points, all of which have the same “attitude” (distance) toward (0,0) on the background of the line at infinity,  $x^2+y^2 = 1$ . A projective transformation that transformed a particular point and particular line into zero and infinity, respectively, on this plane, also transformed a particular curve described with a quadratic equation into the circumference  $x^2+y^2 = 1$ . This initial curve comprises points that have invariant attitudes toward the point and the line.

Thus, the quadratic form  $x^2+y^2 = 1$  corresponds to the quadratic form  $p(x,y)$  and the equation  $p(x,y) = 0$  in initial  $x, y$  coordinates.

By the affine transformation of nonhomogeneous coordinates, the line comes down to one of the following classic forms: ellipse, hyperbola or parabola (degenerated cases are not examined). In corresponding coordinates, this polynomial could be expressed as follows:

$$y^2 = 2px + (e^2 - 1)x^2 \quad (13)$$

Where eccentricities  $e < 1$  for the ellipse,  $e = 0$  for the parabola and  $e > 1$  for the hyperbola. Put differently, when  $e \neq 1$ , then:

$$(1 - e^2) \frac{y^2}{4p^2} + (1 - e^2)^2 \left( x - \frac{2p}{1 - e^2} \right)^2 = 1 \quad (14)$$

$$(1 - e^2)y^2 + x^2 = 1 \quad (15)$$

Thus, using these coordinates, political positions with equal “attitude” (utility) regarding a certain point (focus) in a view of a certain line (cleavage) are placed not on the circumference but rather on an ellipse, a parabola or a hyperbola. The difference between these three forms lies in the difference between their respective placements in relation to the line at infinity. Specifically, the line at infinity does not cross the curve (ellipse), touches the curve at a single point (parabola) or intersects the curve at two points (hyperbola). The constant on each curves is not the distance from point to point but the ratio of this distance to the distance from the cleavage line. The constants represent not preferences but contextualized preferences; specifically, the ratio between preferences and the agenda. These curves have focuses and directrices (as explained further in the next section); the point of the focus in conjunction with the directrix represents this ratio:

$$e = r / \delta \quad (16)$$

where  $r$  is the distance from the point of a curve to the focus and  $\delta$  is the distance between the point and the directrix (as explained further below).

In the Euclidean case, the difference between two political positions is measured by the distance between these positions; in this case, the difference is measured by the ratio of the distance from a point to the distance from a line. For coordinates whose corresponding curve has a normal equation, the ratio could be expressed as follows:

$$u(k, v) = - \frac{a \sqrt{(x_v - ae)^2 + y^2}}{|a - ex|} \quad (17)$$

If we take into consideration that, according to the above formula, the distance from the point of a fixed curve to its focus is a linear function of its coordinates, we can conclude that the utility function of the  $X$  coordinate that corresponds to the large diameter of the curve has the same linear-fractional form as it did in the one-dimensional case.

$$u(k, v) = - \frac{a|x - ae|}{|a - ex|} \quad (18)$$

where  $x$  is the coordinate of the point received by the projection on this diameter.

Note that unlike the Euclidean case, the utility function in this case is not a metric; it is neither universal nor symmetric. The political position toward which the attitude is measured should be visible, that is, it should be placed in a focal point toward a certain directrix to make sense. The voters who vote for this position are not visible and are not playing the same role in the system.

### **Modeling of representation in projective coordinates: The typologies of representation**

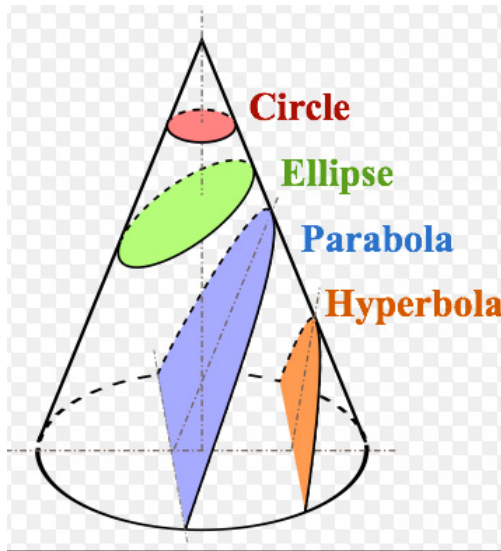
In the previous section, we demonstrated that the function (pattern) of representation (projective transformation) may be classified as one of three types: elliptic, parabolic or hyperbolic. Every function is in essence a discourse. The number of discourses in politics and the reason for this number are questions that supplement the main question regarding the type of representation that prevails and how this representation is linked to the nature of the political system.

There are many factors that influence the pattern of representation followed by a particular political actor. It is possible that the political system itself, as well as its institutions, created the pattern of representation, which is the same for all actors; specifically, the actors compete with each other to occupy the focal positions created by this system. An actor may also choose an individual pattern based on the particular power struggles in which he is involved; it is also possible that voter dispositions and media discourse dictate an actor's logic. Accordingly, the homogeneity of the system may vary. The "formula" of the representation might be the same for every actor, or different actors might have different approaches, making them systemically/ideologically different in the eyes of voters.

If different actors are characterized by different functions, the competition between them becomes multidimensional, which makes it difficult for voters to compare them. In an ideal case, when the political system is stable, the actors' projective planes could coincide (or be parallel) with each other and the plane itself would be the political profile that characterizes the country. In this case, one could say that the discourse of the political actors is defined not by the actors themselves but by systemic institutional, social and economic factors that are not dependent on the actors. If the projective planes are different, one could say that the actors play different political games or that the media creates different (polarized) discourses, either of which may indicate the transitional character of the system.

For a better description of the types of representation, we will consider a homogeneous public space that is modeled by one representation (projection). This space will be connected to a single political actor who represents the correspondent discourse. To clarify this concept, we use a simple geometrical picture of a conic section to depict our model.

Figure 2.6.



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conic\\_section#/media/File:Conic\\_Sections.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conic_section#/media/File:Conic_Sections.svg)

Each projection (a discourse of representation) may be pictured as a conic section. A conic section is the intersection of a circular cone and a plane. It may also be viewed as the shadow of a ball placed on a colored plane. The shadow cast by a light source above the ball is an ellipse. If the light source is in a parallel plane that passes over the top of the ball, a parabola is formed. When the angle between the direction of the light and the cutting plane is reduced further, the branch of a hyperbola is formed. The point where the ball touches the plane is the focus of the conic section. We can think of the light source as the vertex of a cone and think of the center of the ball as the candidate's position. This position will always be on a vertical of the right cone.

We can imagine that the set of voters are on the plane below. The cutting planes of the cone, which are denoted by different colors, represent the planes that may be used by the candidate to interpret his position. The intersection of the cone and a plane is either an ellipse, a parabola or a hyperbola, depending on the slope of the cutting plane (if a plane is parallel to the plane at the bottom of the cone, the result is a special case of the ellipse the circumference). The greater the slope is, the more unequal and polarized the mode of representation is.

Unlike the traditional model, which is symmetrical to the voters and the candidates (i.e., all voters and candidates are placed on a single plane), this figure clearly indicates that the electoral strategies of the candidates are not

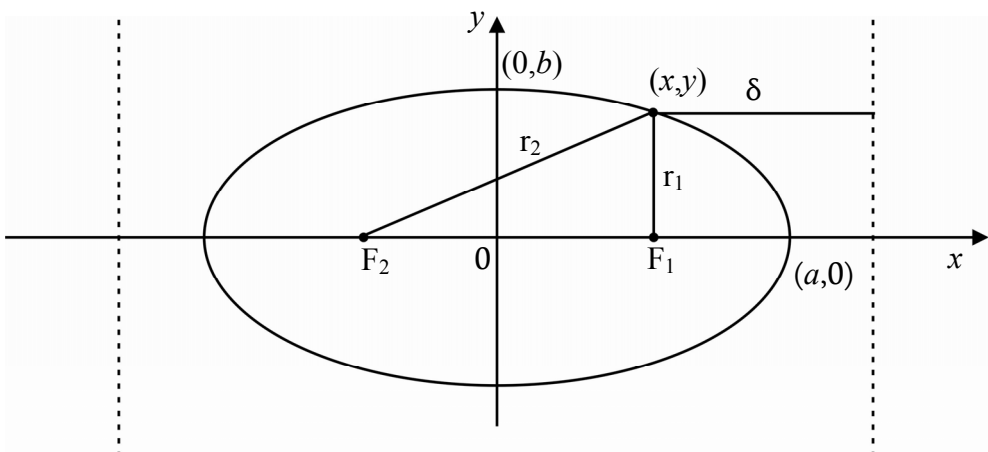
confined to the median center of voter distribution. If a candidate tries to represent all voters equally (in this case, if the section is a circumference), he may try to get ahead of the median center (we assume that the median is in the center of the circle positioned on the base). However, if the candidate also aspires to ideological or segmented representation for particular matters on the agenda or their interpretation, then he must also compete for the slope of sectional planes (polarization) and for the direction of the slope (manipulation). Three types of representation are apparent – elliptic, parabolic and hyperbolic – each of which will be discussed separately.

### *Ellipse*

The ellipse is a curve for which the sum of the distances to two focal points,  $F_1$  and  $F_2$ , is constant for every point on the curve:  $r_1 + r_2 = 2a$ . The normal equation of the ellipse is  $\frac{x^2}{a^2} + \frac{y^2}{b^2} = 1$ . With two focuses, ellipses have two directrices. The distances from an ellipse point to the closer focus  $r$  and to the closer directrix  $\delta$  are proportional to each other:

$$r = e\delta$$

Figure 2. 7.



The  $e$  coefficient, which is constant and (for the ellipse) less than one,  $e < 1$ , is called the eccentricity of the ellipse.

This formula suggests that the distance between the ellipse's arbitrary point and its focus could be expressed as a linear function of its coordinates (in this case, the linear function of the  $x$  coordinate). This quality is also characteristic of the other conics, the hyperbola and parabola.

Whereas in the one-dimensional case, the voter evaluated his attitude toward the candidate by considering cleavage and the central point, this figure shows that in the two-dimensional case, the attitude of the voter is the ratio of two components: the distance between him and the focus and the distance between him and the directrix. It could be said that the candidate stationed in the focus represents the political program that is symbolized by the directrix position toward the center.

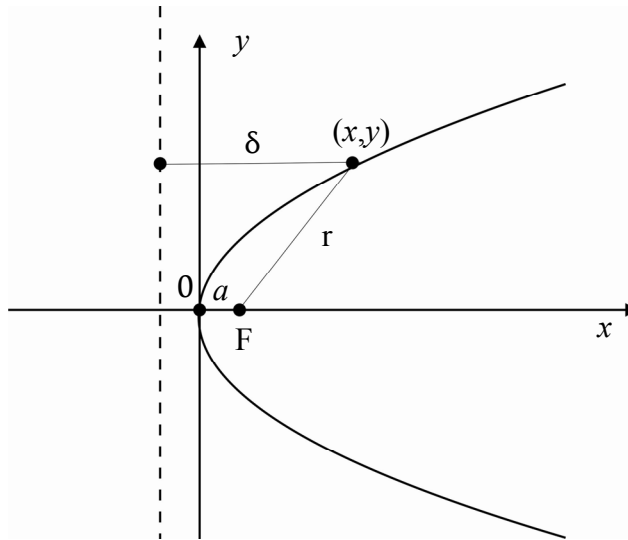
This interrelation of the focus and directrix allows us to ascribe the "coefficient of polarization", the eccentricity  $e$ , to the set of similar ellipses.

The second focal point of the ellipse may be imagined as the virtual position of the opposing candidate. Because the sum of the distances between the point of the ellipse and the focal points is constant, the elliptic model corresponds well to the political situation in which the agenda is formed by "pie distribution" logic. For example, suppose the main political issue is economic and relates to potential tax changes. Society is separated into two social groups (classes), one of which will win and one of which will lose in the present political frame. The essence of politics in this case is bargaining and compromising to reach a balanced decision that accords with the balance of power in society. The second focus of the ellipse in this case represents the virtual opponent who will get the remainder of the pie.

The ellipse does not have asymptotes and does not intersect with the line at infinity at a real point. Accordingly, it represents less ideological and less polarized politics compared with the parabolic and hyperbolic cases. Competition regarding prioritization of the agenda plays a greater role in the elliptical case than it does in the case of the circumference but a lesser role compared with the other two patterns. Accordingly, candidates have a greater chance to change the agenda in the elliptical case than in the hyperbolic case. The most manipulative is the circumference case, wherein every agenda is possible.

*Parabola*

Figure 2. 8.



The parabola intersects with the line at infinity at one real point and thus corresponds to a definitive “ideology” (e.g., an agenda or a vision of the future) that is interpreted by this point. The normal equation of the parabola is  $y=2ax^2$ .

For each point of the parabola, the distance between it and the given point (focus) equals the distance between it and the given line (directrix). If  $r$  is the distance from the parabola point to the focus and  $\delta$  is the distance from the parabola point to the directrix, then  $r = \delta$ , which means that the eccentricity of the parabola  $e = 1$ .

As in the case of an ellipse, a candidate placed in the focus represents the politics signified by the directrix. Unlike the case of the circumference, the X-axis is not interpreted as preferences for this candidate but rather as an agenda. If the circumference represents equally desirable preferences in relation to the center, the parabola represents equally acceptable preferences in relation to the agenda represented by the focus and directrix.

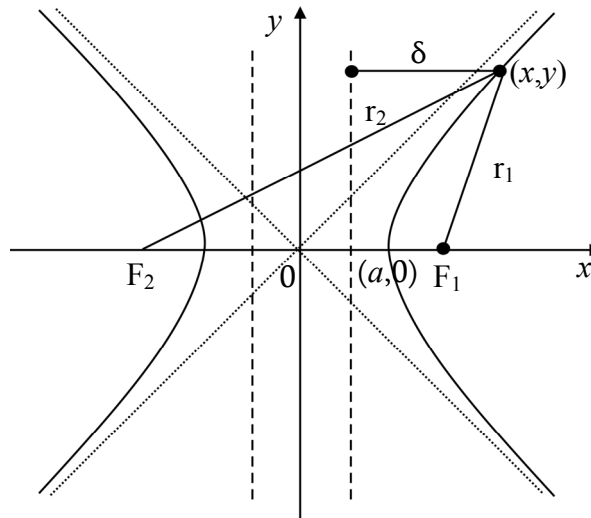
The politics represented by the parabola are ideologized in a “good sense,” that is, the candidate offers all of society the agenda for development, which is represented by the infinite line. The candidate does not have a virtual opponent and thus assumes leadership of all society. He does not intend to achieve either societal agreement (trending toward the center) or polarization (trending away from the center). Rather, this candidate aspires to be legitimized by universality. Given the same political issue that we used before—tax changes—this candidate would approach the issue not from the perspective of distribution but from the perspective of total efficiency.



## Hyperbola

Unlike the ellipse, the hyperbola has two independent branches that have asymptotes. The hyperbola has two foci and two directrices that lay between the branches toward the center. For any point placed on the hyperbola, the difference between the distances from that point to each focal point is constant:  $r_1 - r_2 = 2a$ . As in the case of the ellipse, the distances from a point to the closer focus and from a point to the directrix are proportional to each other, but with a different coefficient. Eccentricity is greater than one for a hyperbola,  $e > 1$ . The normal formula for a hyperbola is  $\frac{x^2}{a^2} - \frac{y^2}{b^2} = 1$ .

Figure 2.9.



Unlike the ellipse, the hyperbola is characterized by a centripetal tendency rather than a centrifugal tendency. The central position is not a preference but rather a cleavage.

If the candidate is placed in the focus of the hyperbola and his opponent is placed in the second focus, the voters placed on the hyperbola assess the candidate in comparison with his opponent, as is the case for the ellipse. However, for the voter, it is the difference between the distances that matters, not their sum. For him, the positions that are placed on the side that is closer to his directrix are more legitimate, whereas positions that lie beyond the second directrix are patently unacceptable (not merely useless). The side that wins tries to rule the other side completely. The system is completely open – the source of

the legitimacy with which the candidate is nourished comes from outside the system. The situation is pluralistic, meaning that it is characterized by two antagonistic positions; this is polarized pluralism, in which the corresponding political clusters do not intersect.

The hyperbolic political actor tries not to manipulate but rather to interpret and in this way to compete for the agenda. Whereas in the case of the ellipse, the sum of the distances interpreted as preferences was  $r_1 + r_2 = 2a$ , one can transition to the hyperbola by reinterpreting the axes. Regarding reinterpretation of the Y-axis, if the preferences become the agenda, then for the hyperbola the sum of the distances becomes a constant (because if  $r_2$  is interpreted not as a distance but as a vector, its sign would change). Thus, the hyperbola is the same as the ellipse except that the hyperbola has a reinterpreted axis: the competition is for the power to define the agenda, and the balance of power is constructed around the set of agendas.

### **Representation and the Political System**

In contrast to the classical model, this model applies not only points (the coordinates that represent preferences) but also lines (which represent cleavages or the agendas that structure political alternatives). A political position is represented not with a point, but with a paired “point and line” – preference and the agenda – and the ratio between them. To compare two political positions, it is not enough to know the coordinates of their representative points; rather, it is necessary to know the coordinates of both points in relation to a single point and a line. Because each voter may have a unique priority regarding his “point and line”, this kind of comparison is impossible until the positions are both projected on a single “system of measurement” where the same “point and line” are fixed. This process occurs in the public space and by itself creates the different structural models of power relations.

We will distinguish between three possible situations based on these models:

1. In a developed democracy, it is possible that the nature of politics and the main political antagonism (cleavage) are formed independently of the candidates. The structure of the power relations depends on the culture of the society, economic relationships, the essence of the political system and outside influences. Accordingly, *politeia* has a definite systemic logic that cannot be changed significantly by the candidates. In this case, it is possible to apply the

model to analyze the character of the system. The three types of representation provide the taxonomy for the three types of democracy – majoritarian (elliptic), proportional (parabolic), and populist (hyperbolic).

2. The system is mixed, or transitional. In this case, it is possible that different types of representation (representatives) coexist within a single political unity and that the type of representation is the subject of the political battle. In this case, political groups have more options to choose from compared with the first case. Certain groups (sub-discourses) are able to find full support through ideological power (parabolic representation), whereas other groups are engaged in polarized antagonism with their opponents (hyperbolic representation). In this kind of system, if the different types of representation are not marginalized, changes in government may entail not only changes in leadership but also changes in regimes. The cessation of this kind of logic in the discourse must be observed in the media space (for example, different television channels should be politicized differently).

3. The system is not free but rather semi-authoritarian. In this case, we can presume that the choice of representation type depends entirely on the candidate's position in the structure of power, which also controls the possibility of influencing public discourse. Because the ruling power controls a large segment of the media (which enables this party to exert significant influence on agenda formation), opponents of the ruling party must implement a different strategy. Opposition parties that suffer from a lack of media attention will emphasize negative mobilization against the government (hyperbolic), whereas the existing government will portray itself as the unalterable leader of the people fighting for the sake of the people (elliptic or parabolic).

We can presume that these diagnostic representation types allow us to verify not only the electoral strategies of individual political powers but also the current character of political democracy in specific countries.

To date, this kind of comparison has not been conducted. Different countries, leaders and parties; their behaviors and dynamics; and empirical statistical research might reveal a different interpretation. For example, the increase of populist parties in well-established democracies might indicate the growth of a new type of representation in a system that historically and at first glance is stable and well established. In peripheral countries, such as Georgia, the character of representation may be influenced less by internal institutions and more by external centers of power.

This work stands on the analysis of only one election and does not give us the opportunity to examine the political system of Georgia from a long-term perspective. For a more complete analysis, it would be useful to analyze

previous presidential elections. Without this analysis, we can hypothetically assume two variants: opportunistic behavior by political actors and populist behavior by political actors.

If we assume that the observed mode of representation of political actors is defined by their functional placement in the political system (government—opposition) and not by their basic values (e.g., their social basis or ideology), then we can assume that their representation changes according to whether their party is the ruler or stands in opposition to the ruler. Thus, we must conclude that the strategy of the ruling political power must differ from the strategy of the opposition.

Alternatively, the type of representation provided by the current political power could be stable, whereas the transition of government powers would entail a regime change. For example, if we conclude that the replacement of Saakashvili by Ivanishvili in the government is connected to a change in the type of representation, we might speak about the democratization of a semi-authoritarian regime when a new regime with more equal rules of engagement (the game) emerges.

### **The 2013 Georgian Presidential Election: Statistical Analysis**

This analysis is based on data gathered by a representative survey conducted prior to the 2013 presidential election. Although the results of this research are described in detail in chapter 5, we will briefly discuss certain aspects of the results in this chapter because such discussion is essential for the statistical interpretation of the model.

The presidential election of 2013, which ended the presidential term of Saakashvili, was not as important as the parliamentary elections of 2012 when most parliamentary seats were taken by Ivanishvili's "Georgian Dream". The turnover in parliament effectively finished Saakashvili's regime because at the same time, new constitutional amendments that significantly limited the power of the presidency became effective. Thus, during Saakashvili's final year in office before the presidential election, the president was virtually without function. Nevertheless, antagonism between the National Movement and Georgian Dream remained the main agenda of political discourse. Despite the transformation of the National Movement into the opposition party, it retained its influence in the majority of the country's institutions because the number of pro-National Movement members in these institutions (e.g., the courts, state

bureaucracy, media, educational establishments and local governments) was disproportionately high.

The electoral competition was dominated primarily by the representatives of these two parties: Margvelashvili represented Georgian Dream, whereas Bakradze represented the National Movement. The third candidate, Nino Burjanadze, also campaigned with formidable strength. Her position was more radically opposed to Bakradze than Margvelashvili's position was, and thus, there was the potential that she would gain the votes of individuals for whom the two main candidates were unacceptable. However, the majority of her potential voters made the strategic decision to give their votes to the stronger anti-National Movement candidate, Margvelashvili. Each of the three candidates gathered a significant number of votes in the 2013 election; however, we chose to limit the statistical analysis to the two main candidates because the number of supporters of the third candidate in our sample was deemed too small (3.3% of respondents) to be statistically reliable.

Both candidates, Margvelashvili and Bakradze, were similar in that neither was perceived as an independent or charismatic leader. Rather, these candidates were seen primarily as representatives of their corresponding political parties. Neither candidate had an independent political image or was perceived as a leader. The choice was determined by the figures that stood behind the candidates: Saakashvili and Ivanishvili. Thus, these two figures should be considered the poles of the competition.

The factor analysis of electoral behavior revealed two main axes of the electoral plane, which are conditionally called pro-Western and pro-democratic (in chapter 5, the same axes are identified by slightly different names). The points on both axes can be interpreted in two ways – as preferences and as agendas – albeit in slightly different manners.

The pro-Western axis is formed by the answers to two questions. The first asks whether the respondent supports Georgia's integration into NATO, and the second asks whether the respondent supports Georgia's association with the EU. These questions correspond to the discourses that dominated the period of Saakashvili's rule: geopolitical orientation toward the West; the best course of development for the country; and "lofty" politics with a long-term agenda. The majority of respondents responded positively to these questions, although the median of Burjanadze's respondents in relation to this axis indicated a negative attitude. Because the politics of Ivansihvili and Saakasvhili were not very different from each other, the difference between the supporters of Bakradze and Margvelashvili was not particularly sharp, although the pro-Western mood among Bakradze's supporters was more pronounced.

The second (pro-democratic) axis was formed not by foreign affairs but by questions oriented toward domestic problems. Answers to these questions reflected attitudes toward a) the constitutional amendments that limited the power of the president and increased the role of the prime minister (E11); b) the mass amnesty granted after the parliamentary elections of 2012 (E12); and c) prosecution of the leaders of the National Movement in the name of restorative justice (P10) (see attachment 2).

These questions clearly indicate that this axis continues the teleology of the democratization discourse, which has prioritized the agenda of systemic transformation since the 1990s. Like the pro-Western axis, the pro-democratic axis symbolizes the agenda of politics, but this agenda is much closer to the polarized representation of private interests. If at the beginning of the transformation, in the 1990s, democracy was perceived as a characteristic of the “West”, such as NATO and the EU, and as a component of the direction of the development of the country,<sup>2</sup> democracy in this case manifests as a variable that is independent of the pro-Western variable.<sup>3</sup> The thematic of democracy fits into the discourse of “restorative justice” that was used by the opposition in its battle with Saakashvili’s regime and its leftovers. Previous discourse slogans, such as the falsification of elections, limits on the freedom of speech, recognition of human rights and the rule of law, were replaced with new themes. These themes continue to present the problems of the country in terms of the shortcomings of democracy and the option of regime change. Although these themes are also characterized by teleology, like the pro-Western axis, they are not geopolitical in nature but rather oriented toward domestic changes. Unlike the pro-Western axis, the pro-democratic axis answers the question “how” rather than “what.” These two axes complement each other well: one could be perceived as an agenda of the second (i.e., projected onto the second). On this second axis, the majority of the respondents supported “justice,” which ultimately led to the electoral success of Margvelashvili.

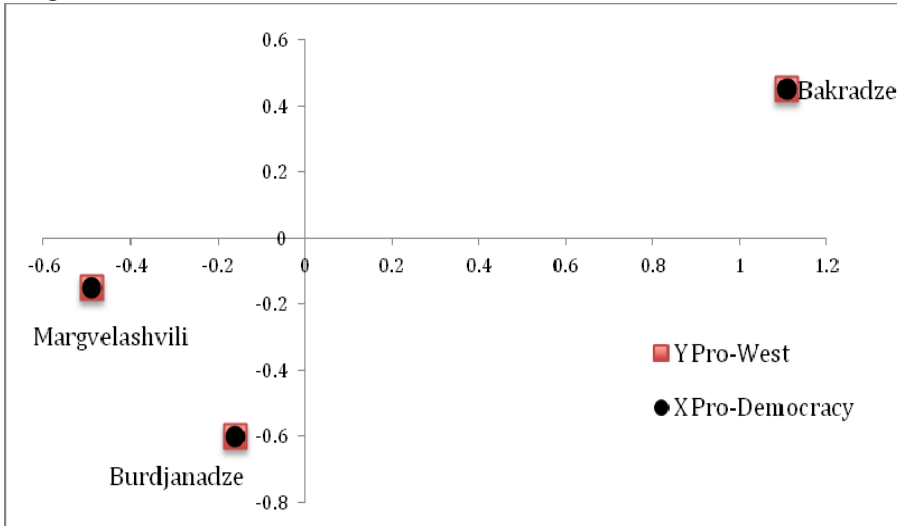
The mean positions of the supporters of the candidates are placed on the plane formed by these axes at the points shown in Figure 2.10. The majority of respondents, who had not decided on a candidate one month before the elections (44.2%), occupied a central position.

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<sup>2</sup> See for example, the preamble of the Georgian Constitution of 1995, which starts with the following words: “We, the citizens of Georgia, whose firm will is to establish a democratic social order, ...”

<sup>3</sup> For a description of political discourses in previous years, see, for example, Muskhelishvili, 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Figure 2.10.



To use existing data to demonstrate our theoretical model, they need a certain interpretation.

It would be logical to analyze the entire picture with the statistical approximation of data variation. We can assume that the candidates' positions represent the focuses of one (characteristic) curve and find this characteristic curve by means of the utility formula, which represents any type of quadratic polynomial in which the distances from voters to the focuses are the variables. We can use distance in this manner because the dot product of these distances in the current distribution was shown to be an independent variable of regression. Then, binary multinomial logistical regression shows that this kind of trinomial is necessarily elliptical, whereas normal (one-membered) logistical regression gives us hyperbolic antagonism of a candidate's voters toward their opponents. This result says little about distribution; the results are caused by the method of counting, not by the character of the distribution.

It would also be natural to use the utility formula that was derived above and includes the ratio of the distances from the point and the line. However, due to the formula's linear-fractional character (which indicates the appearance of singularity), this formula could not be used directly for the regression analysis.

However, the explanation of variance shows that the function with singularity improves the modeling of electoral behavior compared to the traditional form.

The regression shows that the voters for both candidates behave strategically. Specifically, voters pay attention to their chosen candidates as well

as to their candidates' opponents, and they vote against the opponents. Thus, when regression analysis includes not only the distance between the points representing each voter and his chosen candidate but also the distance between each voter and his candidate's opponent, the explanations of the data variations significantly improve. Specifically:

$$U(m) = -0.23r_1 + 0.11r_2 + \lambda_1 \quad (19)$$

whereas  $r_1$  is the distance between the point of a voter and Margvelashvili's point and  $r_2$  is the distance between the point of a voter and Bakradze's point, then  $R^2 = 0.15$  (with the first member only,  $R^2 = 0.034$ )

The same holds true for Bakradze:

$$U(b) = -0.132 r_2 + 0.18 r_1 + \lambda_2 \quad (20)$$

whereas  $R^2 = 0.34$  (with the first member only,  $R^2 = 0.149$ ).

Additionally, as the coefficients of regression in these formulas show, voting against the opponent is significantly more important in the case of a weak candidate (Bakradze) than in the case of Margvelashvili.

This observation suggests that statistical cleavage (the line at which the probability of voting for one candidate is equal to the probability of voting for the other) could be considered an agenda line for the entire distribution of respondents. The position of this line is depicted as the dotted line in figure 2.11. The blue and red lines represent the agendas of Margvelashvili and Bakradze, respectively, and are derived from the following linear regressions, where the probability of voting becomes zero:

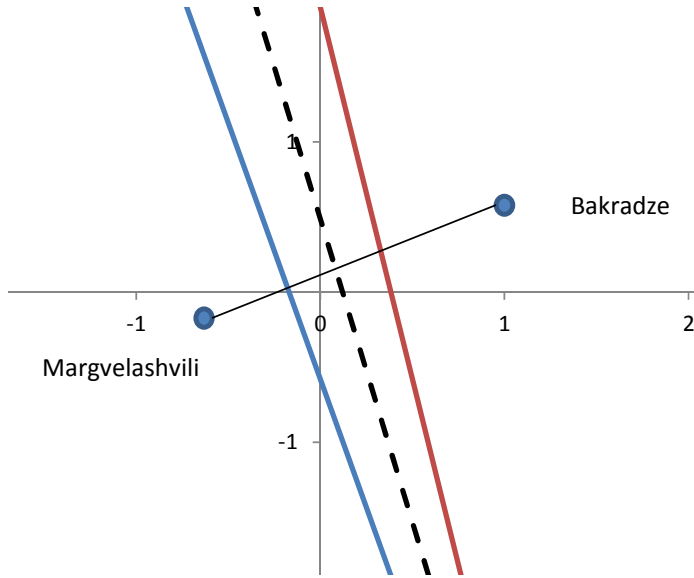
$$U_m = -0.935x - 0.189y + 0.358 \quad (21)$$

$$U_b = 0.834x + 0.25y + 0.145$$

where  $u_m$  is the probability of voting for Margvelashvili and  $u_b$  is the probability of voting for Bakradze.



Figure 2. 11.



We assume that the main strategic game between the two candidates is directed toward getting the aggregated votes of the mean voter (the center of the system). According to our model, this probability is defined by the ratio preference/agenda, which, in this model, gives us the ratio of the distance from the center to the point of the candidate (the mean voters of Margvelashvili and Bakradze, represented by points M and B, respectively) to the distance from the center to the candidate's agenda (the agendas of Margvelashvili and Bakradze, represented by the red and blue lines, respectively).

Based on figure 2.11, it is clear that this ratio for both Margvelashvili and Bakradze is greater than one and that the ratio for Bakradze is much greater than the ratio for Margvelashvili. This difference occurs not only because the deviation of Margvelashvili's point from the center is less than that of Bakradze's point but also because, in the formula of linear regression (formula 21), the free member of regression is greater for Margvelashvili than for Bakradze. These two factors together predict Margvelashvili's electoral victory.

Geometrically, the results indicate that the representations of both Margvelashvili and Bakradze are hyperbolic, albeit the eccentricity of Margvelashvili is significantly lower. Let us assume that the candidate's position is within the focus of the corresponding curve (ellipse, hyperbola or parabola), whereas the corresponding agenda is the directrix of this line. Let us also assume that the center of the system is placed on this curve. The ratio between the distance from the center of the system to the corresponding focus and the

distance from the center of the system to the directrix is equal to the corresponding eccentricities.

Figure 2.11 clearly demonstrates that the mean voter is located on Margvelashvili's side of the common agenda (the dotted line). If the placements of the center and of this line are fixed (i.e., they are independent of the candidates), then centrist tendencies are beneficial for the stronger candidate (in this case, his utility increases for a greater number of voters). Conversely, for the weaker candidate, it is beneficial to move away from the center.

Thus far, we can draw two important conclusions. One relates to the estimation of the model's relevancy, and the other relates to the use of the model to diagnose a country's political system.

Unlike the existing model based on a Euclidean plane, the model presented here is able to explain the phenomena that occur when the candidates occupy positions away from the center. The existence of centrifugal tendencies, which occur when the cleavage is taken into consideration, determines two types of logic in the candidates' behavior: the approximation to the most popular preferences and the retraction from the cleavage. The best positions result from the combination of these two antagonistic trends. Based on this logic, distancing oneself from the center would be a component of any candidate's strategy.

Our model also gives a different interpretation of the valence notion. Valence is a free member of regression (formula 21) that significantly influences the results of the elections and is considered a nonpolitical variable. According to Schoffield, this variable expresses the voter's attitude toward the candidate's personal traits and abilities (e.g., his leadership style) (see chapter 5). This interpretation of valence is close to our approach, with one significant difference. Specifically, in our model, valence is not an expression of non-political beliefs. In contrast, valence becomes an extremely important part of the political outlook: it defines the preferences of the voters regarding the agenda. This variable determines the position of cleavage, which in turn represents the agenda preferences of voters. Thus, valence influences the type of representation, which in our model represents not a personal characteristic of the candidate but rather the function of the political views of the voter.

Regarding the diagnosis of political systems, this theme warrants further discussion. Is the hyperbolic type of representation, which we have diagnosed in Georgia, the political characteristic of the country, or is this type of representation typical for majoritarian elections, which presidential elections are? From the outset, when we classified representation into three types, we imagined that eccentricity was a characteristic of the system. Later, it became clear that eccentricity is a factor of competition, that is, a factor of the

probability of a candidate's election. Thus far, we can prove Georgian electoral behavior is influenced more by the battle for the agenda than by differences among preferences. However, we cannot conclude that this aspect differentiates Georgia's political landscape from that of other countries.

Nevertheless, it is possible to make several judgments based on indirect observations. According to the data, the strategy of Margvelashvili was less confrontational compared to Bakradze. This was somewhat surprising because the public discourse showed that more antagonism and opposition was directed by the supporters of Georgian Dream toward the National Movement than vice versa. Therefore, this relation must be explained not based on discursive characteristics but rather based on the distribution of the power created by the system.

In reality, in Georgia, only the candidate representing the incumbent government is associated with the responsibility to satisfy individualistic preferences. This candidate has the opportunity to talk about multiple obtrusive matters and to make promises based on his administrative resources. In general, the opposition is perceived as irresponsible critic that generates criticism rather than promises. The 2013 electoral campaign was typical in this regard. Margvelashvili's discourse was oriented toward positive socioeconomic and other types of promises, whereas Bakradze's discourse was based on criticism. This situation was defined by the candidates' respective positions in the existing distribution of political power, not by their personal, ideological or other characteristics. Thus, this situation must be considered systemic in nature.

Despite the fact that the elections formally complied with democratic standards, the difference in typology between the candidates' electoral representations may portray a latent inequality between the government and its opposition. This inequality is conditioned by systemic characteristics, namely, the ruling government is associated with preferences, whereas the opposition is associated with the agenda. Accordingly, the political power of the existing government always has an advantage over its opponents. To change the government through elections, the opposition must be able to reinterpret the situation, that is, to displace the existing cleavage and center. If the opposition successfully relocates the cleavage and the center, change will happen quickly and the balance of powers will shift to the opposition as a result of the snowball effect. Changes of governments during the last ten years confirm this scenario.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Political choice in media**

*Marina Muskhelishvili*

#### **Introduction**

A political system is created not only by formal institutions but also by the various meanings given to these institutions. The meaning of “political” in a given society, the means by which the political agenda is set, the intensity of competition among different interpretations – all of these factors influence the real distribution and structure of power and determine the nature of democracy. We applied three types of representation to this broad understanding of “political”: elliptic, parabolic and hyperbolic.

It is reasonable now to try to connect these types of representation to various political systems, political culture and other factors that are subject to empirical study. Because representations are revealed in the discourse, where interpretations of the content are of an ambiguous and pluralistic nature, the search for such connections inevitably creates the risk of subjectivity.

The informal field of symbolic representation and interpretations is formed not within the political system and but rather in the sphere comprising the public space and the media. Thus, it is logical to search for such manifestations not in political institutions but rather in the media. In this chapter, we will discuss public political discourse as it is structured by the media, particularly television. This chapter does not aim to reach definitive conclusions; rather, it is reflective and critical in nature.

#### **Agenda setting – Preliminary considerations**

Except for the guarantee of the freedom of speech, the political power of the media is not regulated by the constitution. Mainstream journalism standards require impartiality and neutrality, meaning that if there is a difference of opinion on certain issue, the journalist is obliged to present all sides without taking a particular position. This standard, together with the freedom of speech, ensures that the choices of individuals are made freely and independently. However, regardless of how impartial and professional the media are (herein, the term “media” refers primarily to television), they cannot avoid making an impact on viewers because they are essential participants in agenda setting in the public space.

The media own independent political power; this power relates primarily to agenda setting and interpretation. Any program of a political nature, together with its content and structure, directly or indirectly provides viewers with three kinds of messages in addition to the stated information: what to think about, how to think and what to think (McCombs, 2014). The media do not reflect reality but rather represent it.<sup>1</sup> By representing reality, the media create a virtual world that is interpreted in their own terms according to a prioritized agenda.

The restrictions in public space, which does not reflect reality but rather represents it, are the same as those in representative democracy. In particular, public space cannot provide everyone with the equal opportunity to exercise the positive right of communication. The struggle for this right acquires a political character.

Like politics, media representation compresses a wide diversity of issues and projects them onto a restricted/limited agenda. In cultural, social and economic life, as well as in politics, there are a multitude of issues, problems, perspectives and interests. However, all of these elements cannot be presented in the media and thus a portion of them do not reach the center of public attention.

For an individual to have an opinion on any political issue, this issue has to be placed in his area of vision. The media continually perform this function by choosing certain topics and events from the wide variety that are available and paying more attention to the selected topics and events than to others. They also report events from certain angles, putting them in a context that helps viewers to form opinions.

Accordingly, the media (regardless of whether the term “media” refers to journalists, media management or owners) have mechanisms to make an impact on the audience, whether intentionally or not. If the selection of events and coverage from a particular standpoint acquire the form of a trend – that is, they are repeated and continued – it creates not a single communication event but rather a discourse. In this case, we can discuss the political bias of the media, which is a form of political power. Moreover, one can argue that a particular viewpoint is always involved in the creation of media products. Needless to say, when politicians and political activists speak publicly about politics, their

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<sup>1</sup> Mathematically, the difference between reflection and representation should be understood as the difference between the projection from infinity and the projection from a finite point, as from the center. The concept of impartial reflection implies the media’s position in “infinity” (in the neutral space beyond society), whereas representation implies the media’s position at a finite point, which itself represents a certain position.

primary addressee is the audience – not a possible interlocutor or debater – to which they deliver their opinions and interpretations. Whereas a journalist is obliged to hide their interpretation and to use indirect methods to deliver their views, politicians use a direct narrative form.

The view that the journalists are impartial because they do not express their positions is incorrect in the sense that it does not take into consideration agenda setting by media. Agenda setting is not a corruption or distortion of the media but rather an integral part of its functioning. Media that exercise blatant propaganda and fail to meet formal professional requirements are easy to recognize. In contrast, media that manipulate the agenda manage to combine their professionalism with political implications.

In recent years, media studies have paid particular attention to agenda setting by the media. This approach suggests that the media influence the audience not by telling people **what to think** but rather **what to think about**. The focus may be on the story or on its contextualization from a certain point of view.

“Slant occurs when a news report emphasizes one side’s preferred frame in a political conflict while ignoring or derogating another side’s. One-sided framing emphasizes some elements and suppresses others in ways that encourage recipients to give attention and weight to the evaluative attributes that privilege the favored side’s interpretation” (Entman, 2010).

The cause of partiality may be the journalist’s subconscious slanted outlook; partiality may also be caused by external factors. Consistent partiality can exert a political influence: “Content bias refers to consistently slanted framing of mediated communication that promotes the success of a specific interest, party or ideology in competitions to control government power.” (Entman, 2010).

The terminology used in such studies occasionally differs. For example, if the relative visibility (salience) of the news is usually referred to as agenda setting, relative salience of the attributes of issues may be referred to as framing, or second-level agenda setting. The content itself (the message) that is articulated in the story can be called the third-level agenda (McCombs, 2014). Although it is relatively new, this direction of study helps us to see the political impact of the media, which is not determined by the influence of external powers (e.g., ownership or the lack of freedom) but rather emerges based solely on the existence of the media.

### **Agenda setting: form is the content**

When someone cries “Help!” or “Eureka!”, they express a legitimate claim to the attention of the people around them. In that moment, they ask for more attention than is given to others. Such a claim is legitimate based on its content. This content represents an urgent problem or a discovery that distinguishes this individual’s agenda from others’ agendas and prioritizes it. Thus, the sequence of issue discussion and reaction is not subject to the equality principle. The democracy principle (one man – one vote) is inapplicable here. The problem does not become the focus of people’s attention through majority voting. In certain circumstances, a single person is sufficient to shift everyone’s attention to what this person says. Although everyone has an equal right to be the person who requires attention, not everyone uses this right equally and simultaneously. If it were otherwise, there would be chaos and there would be no one left to pay attention to the people who require attention.

The same phenomenon occurs in the media. Putting one’s own issue on the agenda begins with attracting attention through the use of signals that are understandable to everyone. When a news anchor speaks with an anxious or tense tone, it does not always mean that something extraordinary happened. Rather, this technique creates expectations and has an impact on viewers’ mood, encouraging them to watch the given channel and not switch to another. Essentially, the viewer receives a hidden message from the journalist, who legitimately demands their attention. Creating expectations, generating tension, being at the epicenter of the events and other journalistic strategies to increase ratings are related to agenda setting. Ultimately, the media channel itself becomes the agenda, just as the political leader becomes symbol of the agenda he represents.

We use the example in which different tones and intonations are used to influence the agenda to make it clear from the outset that agenda setting occurs in numerous fashions.

Agenda setting by the media has been given various definitions by different sources. As a rule, agenda setting is defined as an effort to attract attention to a given issue. In addition, the definition occasionally describes not only the effect to be achieved but also how this goal is achieved. For example, the definition may also include “more often and emphasized portraying issues in the media”:

“Agenda setting is the process of the mass media presenting certain issues frequently and prominently with the result that large segments of the public come to perceive those issues as more important than others. Simply

put, the more coverage an issue receives, the more important it is to people.” (Coleman, 2009, p. 147).

This definition has an implicit logic: The greater the number of times an issue is presented in the media, the more attention that issue gets from the public. The disadvantage of this definition lies in the fact that although “increased frequency in the media” is one method of agenda setting, it is not the only one. This merger of methods and goals makes the definition somewhat imperfect; as the previous example of “yelling” shows, even the tone adopted by the media can be an important element in agenda setting.

Agenda setting may be closely related to priming, which is connected to sequencing. More important issues must be placed before other issues in the news, and the most important issues should be placed at the beginning. The sequence in which topics are presented in the news has a significant impact on public opinion and on the perceived relative importance of events.

Thus, “the importance of the issue” is related to the second definition of agenda setting, which is based on the sequence. The hidden message that is transmitted to the audience through media lies not in the content of the story but rather in the place the story occupies in relation to other stories.

The method and the goal are also mentioned together in definitions of framing. The terms “second-level agenda” and “framing” are closely related to each other; both refer to the dynamic interpretation of an issue. “The way events and issues are organized and made sense of, especially by media, media professionals, and their audiences (Reese, 2001, p. 7)” (Coleman, 2009, p.150). Framing can be understood as the “agenda within the agenda”; it emphasizes certain characteristics and sides of an issue. However, definitions of framing that encompass the secondary agenda are broader:

“Framing is an omnipresent process in politics and policy analysis. It involves selecting a few aspects of a perceived reality and connecting them together in a narrative that promotes a particular interpretation....frames introduce or enhance the availability and apparent importance of certain ideas for evaluating a political object” (Entman, 2010).

“A frame repeatedly invokes the same objects and traits, using identical or synonymous words and symbols in a series of similar communications that are concentrated in time. These frames function to promote an interpretation of a problematic situation or actor and (implicit or explicit) support of a desirable response, often along with a moral judgment that provides an emotional charge. Here again, framing is distinguished from



other communication by its diachronic nature. A framing message has particular cultural resonance; it calls to mind currently congruent elements of schemas that were stored in the past. Repeating frames over time in multiple texts gives a politically significant proportion of the citizenry a chance to notice, understand, store and recall the mental association for future application” (Entman, et al, 2009, p.177).

These definitions clearly describe the main characteristic of framing, namely, the interpretation of events from dynamic perspective. Framing thus involves a strip of events and diachronic action. A dynamic perspective can be of a purely political nature and offer a latent message of event interpretation, for example, “Shevardnadze will resign and everything will be alright”. This perspective may be ideological (laying down a causal link), such as “Investments will arrive, the economy will improve, there will be new jobs and public welfare will increase.” Framing is not only applied to visions of the future; it may also be directed at strengthening or denying the past. Examples of this type of framing include “We must overcome the Soviet legacy” and “Georgian tradition should be maintained”. Framing might not include a dynamic message, but because framing provides viewers with a logical chain of events, it implies the transmission of a latent vision that reflects the dynamics.

Well-structured discourse, which relies on the consecutive use of agenda setting and framing, can be viewed as mythology – a virtual expanding of reality in space and time, with heroes and anti-heroes, symbols and narratives, promises, dynamic reference points, and historical events. Television has all the elements necessary to create such mythology.

In essence, both framing and agenda setting may be considered methods of interpretation. However, one must differentiate between types of interpretation. Dynamic interpretation is in essence a political activity. It is thought that the media use minimal amounts of interpretation, whereas politicians use it constantly to inform voters of their long-term visions. The extent of interpretation in the news depending on how “politicized” the media are. Highly politicized media consistently and widely use interpretation to offer viewers their own versions of reality. Such media create versions of history on a daily basis, which they share with the public.

Dynamic interpretation (framing) and agenda setting are closely interlinked because making an impact on the relative importance of issues means simultaneously transforming their solving dynamics. Emphasizing any issue is an attempt to exert political influence. It is thought that important issues must be resolved before other, less important issues. This recalls a normative belief about the media, namely, that in democratic conditions,

important issues that emerge in the media agenda should be moved to the political agenda; in other words, the government should pay attention to public opinion.

The scopes of attention of the media and the government are not infinite. A government can solve only a limited number of problems in a given period of time. Consequently, issues that are considered insignificant may not capture the government's attention.

“The agenda, as I conceive of it, is the list of subjects or problems to which government officials, and people outside the government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time... Out of the set of all conceivable subjects or problems to which officials could be paying attention, they do in fact seriously attend to some rather than others. So the agenda-setting process narrows this set of conceivable subjects to the set that actually becomes the focus of attention (Kingdom, 1984, p. 3).” (Ryan, 2012, p.21).

If one assumes that normative ideal of democracy implies agenda setting by society, the media must have an important role in this process. Together with the parties and other civil society institutions, the media should be involved in agenda setting by the government.

Many studies have confirmed that the media agenda influences the public agenda both during election periods and between elections. Subjects deemed important by the news become important to society. This relation is manifested primarily in free countries (Coleman, 2009). Essentially, the media agenda is transferred to society, is preserved there for a certain period of time and then loses influential power after several months as other issues move into the leading media position (McCombs, 2014). However, studies of the impact of the media agenda on the government show more diverse and contradictory results.

One particularly pressing topic is agenda setting during election campaigns. During this period, the nature of the dominant agenda and its interpretation can be a highly significant – if not crucial – factor in the election results. The frequency with which leaders present themselves in the media, as well as the political priorities that are presented as most important to the public, are important. In addition, the interpretation of leaders' priorities in causal relation to other issues is significant.

To summarize, the democratic function of the media is not limited to informing voters but rather includes three components: informing, agenda setting and interpretation. The first function is the most closely related to the citizens' control over the government (and, as we will see later, this function is

the most common in majoritarian democracy media, where control is the main form of democratic activity). Second, media impact on agenda setting is essential to ensure participation (in proportional democracies, through ideological coloration in the media). Third, citizens' mobilization, protests and involvement in politics is impossible without dynamic interpretation, which is suitable for a populist context.

Structurally, all three components are connected with different political behavior and divisions. The structuring of media itself is influenced by the prevailing logic. The representation of different (rival, competitor) agendas requires multiple TV channels. Indeed, the "prioritization" (which sets the agenda) already signifies a hierarchy. The most essential parts of prioritization are priming (the sequence of stories in the news), the time given to an issue in the news and political programs, and the interpretation of the events, all of which are offered to the viewers by television. One television channel cannot prioritize different topics at the same time. The competition to establish unique agendas creates a media landscape in which different TV channels have different political colors.

Political color becomes even more pronounced if the subject of the rivalry is not the agenda but rather the cleavage. As mentioned in chapter one, cleavage can be understood as an interpretation of a preference in comparison to the opposite preference. Cleavage is similar to agenda but is presented in a negative manner, as a choice between good and bad (or between bad and worse). If the struggle over the placement of such cleavage plays a central role in media structuring, then multiple interpretations are in conflict with each other. The choice of contextualization (framing) may appear to be the main political feature of the media. For example, a leader may be depicted as a democrat by supportive media, and his actions are described in terms of the democratic framework. However, other media outlets might represent the same actions as incompetent and inefficient. The main agenda for the first media outlet is democracy, whereas the main agenda for the second media outlet is government efficiency.

### **The mirror is flat, the media are not**

The power relations formed in the media are reflected in the functioning of democracy. Television's influence on the functioning of the political system, which is manifested in the increasing personification of politics, coverage of scandals and negative propaganda, is usually described as a crisis of

representation and the strengthening of populism, which in turn damages the traditional institutions of democracy. Defenders of the institution of democracy constantly criticize television for strengthening such trends.

Television has become the space where the borderline between substance and procedure is erased (as discussed in the first chapter). All three behaviors – personification, scandals and negativism – serve to reinterpret the substance in the context of procedure and can be described in terms of agenda setting and interpretive power.

The scandal represents an action that is directed primarily toward agenda setting. The aim of a scandal is to attract attention. Provocation has always been used as a means to focus the public's attention on radical or revolutionary messages. Moreover, the media have their own interests in the fight for ratings. In a country like Georgia, where systemic transformations have become an almost permanent revolution, provocation and scandal are major strategies in the political struggle.

Personification and negativism create cleavages. Negativism helps to interpret the opponent in the context and agenda that yields the greatest benefit for the candidate. For example, instead of an even-handed debate on reforms, it is more convenient/profitable to accuse the opponent of corruption. An image of an external enemy can transform any critique of internal politics into betrayal of the country. The populist leader is created by multiple positive interpretations that are based on the opposition, which transforms the leader into an “empty signifier”.

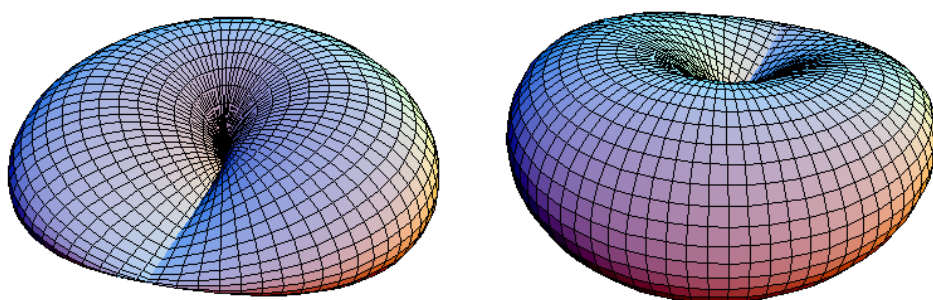
It might be possible to characterize any crossing of the line between substance and procedure as “manipulation”. Then, the concept of manipulation includes all of these events and implies the use of agenda-setting power to strategically reinterpret a situation. However, the term “manipulation” has a negative connotation and implies normatively undesired action. This term latently tells us that someone has broken the rules of the game to gain supremacy by unfair means. The slogan “the end justifies the means” has always been associated not with democracy but with its corrupt and cynical degeneration, despite the fact that such Machiavellianism is recognized as a positive reality by the theory of democracy.

Nevertheless, if the political situation is such that the rules of the game are in the process of transformation, normative assessments are impossible to make. In this situation, transformation of the rules is a part of the game, which leads to the domination of strategic behavior. Furthermore, if we share the dynamic vision of democracy, we must recognize that the rules of society and its functioning are in a permanent process of transformation and review. If

interpretation is the essential component of the system, then its strategic usage is not only inevitable but necessary. Fighting for the sequence of decisions and the political agenda represents an integral part of the functioning of the system and an important area of power relations. The degree of individuals' freedom may be largely dependent on their ability to influence the agenda. Thus, the term manipulation should not be applied to every type of reinterpretation but only to situations that deprive broader society of this right.

The mathematical model that was introduced in the previous chapter gives us the ability to see the entire picture. Political strategies, the implementation of which would be impossible in ordinary Euclidean geometry, may be implemented on a projective plane. A projective plane, in contrast to the Euclidean plane, is a closed set of points with a single surface. It does not have a right and a left (as the one-dimensional political right-left line does) or a top and a bottom. It permits the continuous flows of political positions into each other (through infinity, i.e., the cleavage) through reinterpretation. It is postmodern, opportunistic and non-positivistic in its nature. Because the projective plan makes it possible to cross the line at infinity, the flow of interpretation, plurality of meanings and ability to use "empty signifiers" emerge.

Figure 3.1. Projective plane:



Source: "CrossCapTwoViews". Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Commons - <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CrossCapTwoViews.PNG#/media/File:CrossCapTwoViews.PNG>

On the Euclidean plane, rational political strategies were clear and implied taking the best possible electoral position. There are multiple possible strategies on the projective plane, which complicates rational behavior logic.

Agenda-setting behavior and preference (interest) representation are different strategies that contradict rather than coincide with each other. A

subject seeking political support cannot use both strategies equally; the greater the potential representation in a strategy, the less impact it has on the agenda, and vice versa. Indeed, if there are two political positions competing to attract voters' attitudes, the presenters of these positions must be willing to engage in debate and to promote their positions by criticizing the other. However, this kind of behavior actually promotes their opponent's position by putting it in the agenda. In this regard, the candidate and his opponent are not only rivals but also allies, fighting together against political forces that have different agendas and want to attract attention to other topics.

There is a second, opposite strategy: ignore the opponent instead of criticize him. In this case, instead of protecting his position from criticism, the candidate focuses on a different agenda and talks about issues that are more profitable to him. Although ignoring the opponent and avoiding engagement with him weakens the candidate's representation of his position, it also weakens the opponent's ability to attract public attention.

These contradictory strategies of agenda setting and interest representation would be incompatible without interpretation, which can work in both directions. Political alternatives from which the voters can choose now appear different from different points of view. A political offer that is desirable in one agenda may be undesirable in another. By establishing and moving cleavage positions, interpretation creates a third strategy, which operates with multiple meanings.

The struggle for the power to interpret can generate more dividends for the candidates than preference representation or agenda competition. Such games are limited only if it is difficult to influence the dominant interpretation, as is the case when political cleavages are firmly rooted in socioeconomic or cultural (ethnic or religious) grounds or are historically established (e.g., the line between right and left). However, when the situation is not stable, and in particular during transitions, the role of interpretation increases. Opportunism, populism, manipulation, demagoguery and other traditional political techniques play a much more significant role in this context. In this environment, "impossible coalitions" are created, which are common in populism. Impossible coalitions are created when supporters of opposite ideologies vote for the same candidate; the right-left line bends and turns into a circle. In this situation, the relation between the rules of the game and the substance becomes voluntary and the cleavages start to move.

When there is a struggle for interpretative power, the situation becomes relativistic (hyperbolic representation). In this situation, a) there is competition regarding the position of the cleavage (which is also mobile) and b) the

positions of the candidates become “points of manipulation” corresponding to preferences that have one meaning in one agenda and a different meaning in another agenda. Accordingly, such points are not in equilibrium but rather have the shape of a saddle. In fact, the entire field of preferences acquires this relativist characteristic, and each voter sees his preferences in terms of interpretations – “strategic behavior” is the norm for him.

In the previous chapter, three ideal types of politics were described. One can be assumed that they are linked to three different types of democracy, which are called majoritarian, pluralist and populist (or manipulative) democracies. The media, together with political actors, participate in the structuring of these three types of democracy. The following section clarifies how the structure of the media depends on the prevailing ideal type of democracy.

### **Media systems: Internal, external and polarized pluralism**

The classification of media systems into three ideal types by Hallin and Mancini allows us to draw parallels between the mathematical model and actual institutional structures. Such parallels can be very shallow and extremely difficult to prove empirically, but they can suggest certain useful findings on an intuitive level.

Hallin uses the following characteristics<sup>2</sup> to conduct a comparative analysis of media systems/institutions (Hallin, 2004):

- 1) The level of development of the media market, especially if high-circulation press exists;
- 2) Political parallelism, which includes the density and nature of the relationship between the media and political parties and, more generally, indicates whether the media system is relevant to the deep political divisions that exist in the society;
- 3) The level of development of journalism as a profession; and
- 4) The level and character of state intervention in the media.

Based on comparative analysis that uses these characteristics, the authors identify three types of ideal media systems:

1. Mediterranean: the model of polarized pluralism;
2. North Central Europe: a democratic-corporatist model characterized by external pluralism; and
3. North Atlantic: a liberal model with internal pluralism.

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<sup>2</sup> Because this classification applies only to democratic countries, freedom of speech is implied.

Types of pluralism (internal, external and polarized) can be reviewed as characteristics of political homogeneity/clustering of the media. Internal pluralism implies the possibility of reflecting all political positions in one media outlet. In this case, the media are neutral toward politics. With external pluralism, the media are non-partisan but have ideological coloring; the complete picture of political visions is created only by the combination of media outlets, not by a single media outlet. Media politicization reaches its maximum in polarized pluralism. In this case, the media are involved in partisan battles and journalists make direct efforts to influence voters' behavior.

The authors characterize these three systems in greater detail as follows (Hallin, 2004, p. 67). The polarized pluralism model is characterized by "low-circulation newspapers; an elitist, politically oriented press; high political parallelism; commentary-oriented journalism; politically dominated broadcasting controlled by the state; low professionalization of journalism and its instrumentalization; and a strong role of the state in general". The democratic corporatism model (external pluralism) is characterized by "high-circulation newspapers; early development of the mass media; strong party press (historically); political pluralism and strong autonomy in broadcasting; strong professionalization and institutionalized self-regulation; a significant role of the state, but without limiting the freedom of speech; and huge subsidies from the state, especially in strong public broadcasting". The liberal model (internal pluralism) is characterized by the following: "medium-circulation newspapers; an early development of mass commercial press; neutral commercial press; informational journalism; a professional model of public broadcasting; strong professionalization of journalism with non-institutional regulation; and a relatively small role for the state compared to market mechanisms".

It is obvious that nature of a media system is linked to the content of discourse, as well as to a country's political system. Majoritarian (Anglo-Saxon) democracies are closely associated with the concept of neutral journalism, whereas proportional and consensual systems (continental Europe) create political parallelism in journalism. Political parties in proportional and consensual systems, in contrast to those in majoritarian systems, are not seeking to gain legitimation by representing the entire nation but by representing segments of society. The abundance and polarization of clientelistic relations in Southern democracies lead to the political instrumentalization of the media and are incompatible with the characteristics of the liberal media model. Polarized pluralism is connected to the existence of political forces that question the legitimacy of the current system. In such societies, there is strong ideological confrontation and polarization.



These institutional features of the three types of media systems can also be applied to the strength of the three types of political logic (which have been reviewed previously) in given countries.

“Interpretative/manipulative discourse” (the polarized pluralism model) is the most politicized and most closely follows the logic of the power struggle. According to Hallin, such model is strongest in countries that are characterized by late democratization and for which a large part of the twentieth century is associated with authoritarian and fascist regimes (e.g., Mediterranean countries). The political struggle is strongly ideological and political divisions are radical. Procedure and content are most significantly mixed in this environment because the transformation of the country’s system is an important issue on the political agenda. The liberal North Atlantic system is characterized not only by the existence of fact-based, neutral media but also by a two-party system. In a bipartisan system, each party seeks legitimacy by representing the interests and opinions of the majority because the successful party will take full responsibility for governance and will be obliged to represent the entire population. It is easiest to separate the rules of the game from the content in a bipartisan system because this system is based on the belief that is typical of liberal positivism, namely, faith in the existence of a neutral observer/impartial referee.

In continental European countries, the existence of various types of media outlets is compatible with a multi-party system in which the different parties are closely linked to particular groups of society. In a heterogeneous society, the pluralist tradition of consensual politics is strongly developed. Accordingly, the representation of various segments of society is conducted by political parties and media outlets, each of which know their audience and scope very well. The parties and the media make no claim of universality and therefore can offer their own agenda and interpretation. The natural fragmentation of society is reflected in correspondent fragmentation of the parties and the media, which later makes it necessary to achieve consensus among the parties (i.e., to form a coalition government) to create a majority in the country’s parliament. This situation creates procedural flexibility, which limits manipulation through the plurality of competitive agendas rather than through the separation of rules and content.

Polarized pluralism and strong ideologization historically characterize southern and eastern Europe. This can be explained by many factors, including the openness of these peripheral countries to European influence. Georgia can be viewed in this peripheral context. Feelings of backwardness and of being “peripheral” are the most important factors, which stigmatize public discourse and change its structure. Preferences that exist in this society are no longer equal but hierarchical; these preferences are dominated by a source that lies beyond

society, such that the center of influence is external to the country. The feeling of being peripheral strengthens the use of negativism and delegitimization in political discourse, which creates politics similar to those of Schmitt, which is characterized by polarized segmentation into friends and foes. These countries constantly face challenges and changes to fundamental institutions, which results in a constant mix of political content with the rules of the game.

### **Structure of the media discourse in Georgia**

Of these three models, Georgian political discourse is unquestionably closest to polarized pluralism. However, due to strong political influence, its freedom has remained restricted/limited, and the fight for discursive domination has been strong and often violent.

The classification of media systems described in the preceding section refers to countries and historical circumstances wherein a certain (high) level of the freedom of speech ensures the possibility of power games in public discourse, the operation of the “invisible hand of mental matrices” and the formation of relevant informal institutions of representation. In countries in which freedom is limited, such events would be impossible. Even in totalitarian states, such as the Soviet Union, the media discourse is influenced by the context, but the strong concentration of power in the hands of the state prevents the formation and structuring of political pluralism.

After the start of Perestroika and the democratization processes, depoliticization of the media has been one of the main focuses of media and society, as well as external promoters of democracy. There was a declared vector of transition from propaganda journalism, whose task was to influence the public, to new journalism, which serves the public. Neutral, impartial and fact-based journalism represented the normative ideal, which has been recognized as the dominant standard. The new rules of the game would ensure that procedure was kept separate from content and that the media were kept separate from politics. However, this rule proved to be inconsistent with the expression of political content by the media.

In the context of Georgia’s systemic transformation, journalists did not (and still do not) perceive themselves as mechanisms that simply reflect events, playing the role of “outsider” or “external observer” in the development of the country. Most journalists, especially those who wrote about politics, felt that they were fulfilling a civic duty in the democratization, development and progress of the country. The impact of their profession, publications and

activities on politics was not a minor issue to them. Outwardly impartial and inwardly civically motivated journalists found ways to influence agenda setting and the formation of cleavages.

In practice, the new standards have created broad opportunities to exert influence. Being impartial and neutral essentially means that equal time should be provided to every party – or at least to the parties that are considered to be the main players. It also means that journalists should not be biased toward any particular party and should lead the debates in a way that does not show the journalists' own positions.

When the main political issue is competition among different preferences, the concept of impartiality is working in practice. Viewers and readers are introduced to the parties' arguments and views and make independent decisions. The media environment provides pluralism, which promotes the development of informed voters<sup>3</sup>.

However, journalistic standards say nothing about agenda setting, the diachronic aspect of reality reflection. There are no objective norms concerning the choice of topics for discussion or the sequence of the news. The only criterion is that the topic should be as important as possible to as many people as possible. Because there are many such topics, a media outlet has significant leeway to set its own agenda or to adapt its agenda to the interests of the party favored by that outlet.

Adhering to the formal norms regarding political propaganda proved to be easy. A combination of agenda setting and gate-keeping, which fixes the location of cleavage, was the most successful strategy. For example, in political debates, the favored candidate should not face the “up-and-coming” opponent but rather the most odious opponent, who will make the favored opponent look good by comparison. Similarly, if opposition exists in the parliament, the opposition should criticize the government without going beyond of the scope of the governmental agenda.

Accordingly, the media have learned to operate through interpretation and meaning formation, which was quite different than the blatant and direct propaganda of the Soviet Union. Agenda setting and cleavage formation became

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<sup>3</sup> Obviously, even this form of “first-order” (as we call it) pluralism has never been perfect; indeed, it has been violated at every opportunity. However, a segment of the media, especially the television media, has always been subject to external supervision. Flagrant violations on by these media outlets would definitely be noticed and reflected in the reports of international observers. Accordingly, when the opinion of the West was a strong source of legitimacy, all sides of the political competition tried to some extent to disguise/mask impartiality.

the main political components of this new professionalism.

In the previous chapter, we described two axes of political confrontation that significantly influence voters' political behavior: pro-Western and pro-democratic. On election day, every position placed on the plane formed by these axes is equal: one voter – one vote. However, in terms of discourse, the opposite ends of these axes (their directions) are not the same. Each axis has a dominant direction, which is well articulated and propagandized. For the most part, the opposite end exists latently and does not have an equally legitimate discourse.<sup>4</sup> Such discursive differences between the ends of the axes directly indicate that voter behavior is dominated by teleology and agenda hierarchy.

Two important factors have the greatest effect on the preservation of this teleology.

The first factor is historical heritage. For nearly a century, the population of Georgia has (voluntarily or forcibly) been involved in another future-oriented process: building communism. In that totalitarian project, questioning the agenda of development was impossible. Therefore, the collective future and direction of development was and is the most important source of political power legitimization.

The second factor lies in the orientation of post-Soviet transformation with respect to “the West”; the openness of Georgia to the outside world and to external influences. The most important political decisions have found and still find legitimacy from outside the country (i.e., from the West), which gives these decisions the same teleological, imitative nature. The “West”, transformed by the political discourse into the bright (but no less totalitarian) future, acquired the meaning of the agenda.

In addition to these two trends, which appear at first glance to be very different, there is another factor, namely, the cultural shock experienced by Georgian society when it transitioned into the open global discourse from the closed information space of the Soviet Union. Taken together, these factors create an intense struggle for discursive domination. Power inequalities have a deep existential and symbolic nature and, in the discursive field, create domination of the issues. Manipulation of the interpretation of these issues is easy because they are beyond the scope of people's personal experience.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This is proved statistically by the fact that the mean of the respondents who do not answer the relevant question is inclined toward the dominated end.

<sup>5</sup> “When people have direct, personal experience with an issue, that issue is said to be “obtrusive” for them, and they usually do not need more information from the media” (Zucker, 1978). Unobtrusive issues, those issues with which people have little to no personal

Systemic transformation teleology enabled the media to combine civic activism and the new professional standards. The media soon learned that its role is to control the government and that fulfillment of this role is not perceived as politicization but as impartiality. Accordingly, opposition to the government was established as a legitimate style of media functioning. This version of merging procedure and substance, political and neutral, and reflection and influence was found to be normatively acceptable to society.

It was also revealed that the teleological nature of discourse does not exclude the possibility of media pluralism. However, such pluralism could not be established as a competition between the opposite ends of one axis (because of their inequality, one of the ends would definitely lose) but rather as a competition between different priorities of development (different axes). In the previous chapter, we described the transformation dynamics of the axes that form the electoral plane: from one comprehensive direction toward two competing agendas. To analyze media structure, it is important to add that the competing agendas are formed by competing television channels. Instead of describing the plurality of these television channels, we focus on only two, Rustavi 2 and Imedi, which played the biggest roles in the establishment of pluralist teleology in 2006-2007.

Rustavi 2 was the first to boldly cross the invisible border between reflecting reality and affecting it. Beginning in the final years of Shevardnadze's government, Rustavi 2 was the leading agenda-setting media. By gaining a reputation as one of the main critics of Shevardnadze's government, Rustavi 2 obtained the trust of a large part of a frustrated society, which had been translated into political mobilization in 2003. It is difficult to analyze the extent to which the actions of the managers and journalists of Rustavi 2 were sincere or strategic because together they articulated the dominant discourse – a pro-Western direction of development – in which the largest number of activist groups unconditionally believed. Television became a major springboard for the Rose Revolution, with its simple but effective slogan, "Go".

After the Rose Revolution, Rustavi 2 went through a short period of transition. Heartfelt support for the winning regime was replaced by the direct management of Rustavi 2 by this regime. Television thus became a mouthpiece for the government. This development released space for the opposition media. The space remained virtually empty until 2006-2007, when it was taken by Imedi, the main rival of Rustavi 2.

Together with the government, Rustavi 2 retained its leadership as the

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experience, are the issues most likely to become important to people if they are high on the media's agenda

representative of pro-Western teleology. It created a consecutive/successive narrative of a dynamic interpretation of events, wherein topics, events, individuals and broadcasting took the shape of coherent matrix. To borrow art terminology, Rustavi 2 drew a picture in which the infinitely distant point of perspective was well read and created the impression of realistic scale and depth for every element of the picture. Unlike the other media, which were not distinguished by such coherence, Rustavi 2 simply omitted the extra details in favor of the main perspective.

Unlike Rustavi 2, Imedi initially did not function as an everyday interpreter or unequivocal reader of events. Despite the political background, Imedi fought for ratings, which were based not on populism but on professionalism. Nevertheless, Imedi's agenda was becoming increasingly different from that of Rustavi 2; this difference first created bipolar discourse and then introduced bidiscursive polarization into the media space. Imedi seized on the oppositional agenda, which had been abandoned by Rustavi 2; this agenda comprised democratization, human rights, control of the government and systemic transformation.

The confrontation of discourses supported by these two television channels restructured the public space. Symbolic landmarks, which had more or less been arranged along one dimension, were now deployed in two independent axes. One of the axes, which was traditionally supported by Rustavi 2, described reality as a continuation of geopolitical confrontation between the West and the Soviet Union. The discourse of Rustavi 2 was externally oriented, globalist, pro-NATO, pro-Western, pro-hierarchical and pro-state. By contrast, Imedi's discourse took democratic values, which previously were considered a component of pro-Western development, and gave them the meaning of an independent agenda. Imedi's discourse encompassed human rights, control of the government, the supremacy of law and a type of localism that had an anti-globalization nature. Thus, the democratization project was separated from Westernization project, which was a significant change from a monistic teleological project. External orientation (the Euroatlantic space) and internal orientation (democracy) became the main political cleavage around which logic was formed.

A bipolar structuring was expressed not through the support of differently articulated preferences but through the contrast between competing interpretations and agendas, which formed conflicting mythologies. Rustavi 2 viewers lived in Georgia, which had tried to finalize the unfinished project of the Cold War. Imedi viewers lived in an authoritarian police state that did not belong to them. Both scenarios were interpreted in relation to certain political

figures: Rustavi 2's mythological heroes were Mikheil Saakashvili and the National Movement leaders that surrounded him. Imedi created a team of political faces that later organized political street protests.

A pogrom of the oppositional Imedi by police in November 2007 destroyed the discursive balance and transformed the structure of public space from bipolar into unipolar plus (1+). Other independent televisions (Caucasia, then Maestro) remained, but could not replace Imedi in terms of financial resources and coverage area. All channels that reached Georgia's regions merged into one, pro-government discourse. The balance of power was reinforced in favor of the National Movement, especially because the 2008 war reignited the dominant discourse and consolidated the population against an external enemy (Russia).

When Bidzina Ivanishvili appeared on the political horizon in 2011, his appearance instantly affected the political climate. This impact began even before society was informed of what this previously private businessman had to offer and of the program with which he planned to enter politics. Ivanishvili had the resources that the previous opposition lacked; consequently, he could create new public spaces and thereby overcome the existing dominant discourse. His first political messages were the establishment of a new discourse in television and the delivery of independent broadcasting to Georgia's regions, which had previously been unavailable.

Ivanishvili's appearance created a new discursive division, which was similar to the previous division but with certain distinguishing features. Like the previous stage of political confrontation, competition emerged from the creation of an independent agenda, which itself was very similar to the previous, pro-democratic discourse. However, this discourse also had certain unique characteristics, including its national character, socioeconomic dimension, and appeal to a wide variety of social groups (villages). Moreover, the faces and accents had changed.

The change of government in 2012 was again the result of mass protest attitudes, which spawned street demonstrations and acute discursive confrontation. The subsequent transformation of the discourse and the media structure allows us to draw several conclusions regarding the sustainability of the basic characteristics of the system.

The opportunistic transformations undergone by actors in the political media as a consequence of changes in their functional place in the power relations indicate that the struggle to control the agenda is strategic rather than ideological in character. Democratic values have largely shifted to the rhetoric of the now-oppositional Rustavi 2 and the National Movement, whereas the new government flaunts its efficient pro-Western integration. This replacement

of actors and discourses indicates the low quality of their representativeness. The failure to achieve reality and rationality renders symbolic signifiers not just empty but meaningless and destroys the simple structure that existed previously. Simultaneously, the “correction” of the axes has been increasing – the trend of equalization of each axis’ ends is competing with the trend of agenda confrontation.

It can be said that the rules of the game in which political actors (political powers and the media) operate require periodic re-interpretation, opportunism, image transformation and discourse by these actors. Some actors manage to satisfy these requirements on a frequent basis. For example, Saakashvili showed exceptional skill in this regard. Fast and conjectural change of the leading topic was common. Saakashvili did not engage in polemics with his opponents; rather, there was the impression that when an opponent’s arguments gained traction among the public, he just changed the subject and set new priorities. The issues that were important during his government appeared in his rhetoric and in the agenda of his supporting media not simultaneously but successively. The restoration of territorial integrity was replaced by EU integration, which in turn was replaced by membership in NATO. In the pre-electoral period, the fight against poverty became a priority for the government. Then, once again, territorial integrity and Russia took the leading spot on the agenda. When the circle closed after the 2008 war and launching new success-oriented campaigns became difficult, global topics were replaced by relatively narrow campaigns, such as the Lazika project. After he moved to the opposition, Saakashvili returned to the democracy discourse.

Agenda manipulation and self-reinterpretation are effective means to maintain popularity and thereby to extend a political leader’s period of governance. However, as the number of controversial interpretations increases, the trust in the interpreter decreases. Discourses remain, but their actors must be changed periodically. Existing parties, leaders and television channels eventually become weak and must make way for new faces and symbols.

Low confidence and dynamic change of the actors is typical of the populist context. This system is characterized by opportunism (which is caused by the shift of political forces from one functional role of the system to another, e.g., from the government to the opposition), populism, polarization and manipulation. Moreover, these features do not seem to be temporary or transitional in nature. Nevertheless, despite its dissimilarities with established democratic regimes, the populist system appears strong and structured.



### **Georgian Democracy – populist and manipulative**

In the theoretical part of this work, we explained that agenda setting represents a type of political power. Concentration of such power in one actor creates the opportunity to use it strategically, which ensures that the results desired by the power holder will be achieved, even in a democracy. Using negative interpretations in political competition creates a struggle to move cleavages. For some authors, such a situation is the main essence of any type of politics:

"Even if Carl Schmitt went a bit too far in his vivisection of the original act and the defining feature of politics when he reduced it to the appointment of 'a common enemy', he was right when tracing the essence of politics to the naming of, and dealing with, 'the other'. Politics, he may say, is about creation and manipulation of oppositions and drawing boundaries between 'inside' and 'outside', and consequently differentiating between the way in which each of the two members of the opposition, and so also each of the two sides of the border, are dealt with." (Bauman, 2012, p. 17).

Unlike Bauman, this work considers the formation of cleavages to be one type of politics but not the only one. Such a Schmittean understanding of politics differs from representation, which implies the existence of pre-political, horizontal divisions in society and their translation into politics through parties or parliamentary channels. In contrast to this view, we consider the struggle to build cleavages to be the new, postmodern, populist and manipulative variety of politics, which weakens representation. This variety of politics creates not horizontal but vertical separations between the elites and the rest of society.

"Populist movements tend to deny horizontal cleavages (such as the Left/Right divide) and to promote the fundamental unity of the people, while introducing a new vertical dimension, which may exclude, for instance, elites at the top and foreigners at the bottom" (Meny, 2002, p.12).

Populism is not limited to hybrid regimes such as that in Georgia. Rather, it represents an increasing trend that is also occurring in democratic countries (Guisto et al, 2013). Although populism is compatible with the stable functioning of the formal institutions of polyarchy, the question remains whether it is compatible with the normative ideal of democracy.

The fact that the nature of politics is becoming more similar to Schmittean politics may indicate that the essence of politics is changing, becoming more

radical – “hyperbolic” in our terminology – and focusing less on the competition between individual preferences and more on operation through total identities, empty signifiers and floating cleavages. This indicates that an unequal distribution of agenda-setting power, and the representation of these inequalities (rather than preferences), is in the foreground of the political system. Regardless of the reason for the tendencies that enhance the actuality of the agenda – globalization, capitalism or technological changes, among others – these challenges are external to the previously set context and have caused its transformation.

Because, as we have argued, the substance of politics is interconnected with its institutions procedural rules, such transformation of the content can be manifested differently between established democracies and transitional regimes. In countries where the rules of the game, the constitution, informal norms and political parties are strong/stable, growing populism may be of a marginal nature and may be perceived as a distortion or illness of democracy or as an insignificant novelty. However, in regions where the institutional system is in transition, populism can have a functional role in the formation of the new system.

In regions where the institutional system is in transition, it is possible to talk about the growth and spread of the third ideal type of democracy/political regime. Like the majoritarian and proportional systems, this system is characterized by an electoral government, but it gives a distinct meaning to such government. Normatively, the third type of democracy is an ideal type; institutionally, it is an unfinished project. Because its formal institutions are borrowed from the first two types of democracy and do not fully compose its new substance, these institutions are unable to regulate the power relations connected to the new substance. The third type of democracy is not necessarily limited to hybrid regimes; it may also include Southern European democracies, which are not usually considered a special variety of political system. If we borrow Rosanvallon’s terminology, we could describe such regimes as counter-democracies because they exist in an atmosphere of strong distrust. However, populist democracy is deemed the better term because it describes the essence of the politics that are dominant in such regimes.

The main institutional difference between the classic majoritarian and proportional democracies and populist democracy lies in the fact that populist democracy is the most radical in terms of erasing the borderline between substance and procedure. Consequently, the line between the political and non-political is also erased, which is a means of expanding or narrowing the “political” area. The elimination of this line reveals why it is important to

include media systems in the analysis of the third type of democracy. Specifically, expanding the area of “political” causes politics to extend beyond formal institutional frameworks and infiltrate the media, civil society, the economy and everyday life.

The playing ground of populism is the field of legitimization and delegitimization. Populism constantly breaks the rules of established political discourse, which leads to distrust and annoyance – similar to the use of prohibited methods in football. Because its essence is in conflict with formal rules, populism leads to the corruptive distortion of these rules. When populism is used by political leaders, it ignores opponents; instead of entering into an open confrontation with opponents, populism uses manipulation and negativism. In transitional countries, populism evolves into authoritarianism. When used by opponents, populism creates new social movements, mobilizes the masses and defends democracy. In its extreme forms, it can also cause disobedience, rebellion and revolution.

The extension of political power beyond the formal political system<sup>6</sup> weakens the regulation of this power by constitutional mechanisms and thus creates the potential for abuse. Although it is formally democratic and based on majority government, populist democracy can degenerate into minority government.

Television plays a major role in such degeneration because the power to create cleavages is concentrated in television. Leaders in the third type of democracy win majoritarian elections by mobilizing the majority. To do so, a populist leader needs to force voters to choose between bad and worse. If the leader holds the agenda-setting power (that is, if he controls television), he will be able to mobilize the majority in this manner, at least for a certain period of time.

If a political actor occupies a central place in which agenda-setting power is concentrated, his place is automatically secured (if he is skilled at manipulation). Thus, if the agenda-setting power is concentrated and the system formally remains democratic, the system is automatically transformed into a minority government.

Critical readers might question why, out of all the media types, only television is discussed in this study. The influence of the internet and social media on the nature of political communication and the transformation of agenda-setting power remains a broad but separate research topic. It is likely

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<sup>6</sup> Manin mentions the trend of political discourse going beyond the formal framework and entering the media space in his discussion of the transformation of representative democracy (Manin, 1997).

that the spread of the internet has limited the impact of television and makes the exercise of this power more chaotic and egalitarian. However, because the empirical portion of this paper is about Georgia, where the main carrier of political communication remains the television,<sup>7</sup> we decline to discuss the internet in this paper.

According to mainstream approaches, Georgia is still considered an unfinished project of democracy. However, if we look from the perspective of the typology of elective regimes, bearing in mind the third type of democracy, we can see dynamics that are not directed toward the completion of this project but rather indicate other, populist, third-type democracy consolidation. In this case, the difference between formal institutions and informal logic can be a stable (not temporary) characteristic of the system, which makes the nature of exercising power increasingly volatile and corruptive, which in turn generates mass protests.

A dynamic mix of authoritarian and populist tendencies, which is characteristic of Georgia, could be interpreted as a lack of institutional order, which is common during the transitional period. Even more radically, many aspects of this mix may result from the personal characteristics of the leader. In this regard, Saakashvili's regime was significantly different than those of Shevardnadze and Ivanishvili.

By contrast, we can assume that the lack of institutional order is not a temporary phenomenon but rather a stable form of government, which can be called a populist democracy.

Political dynamics in recent decades support this vision. Despite the fact that political competition has historically been limited and the government has used power recourses against its competitors, Georgia experiences changes of regimes and discourses. Process dynamism – the heated battle for power and intense public involvement in the process – allows us to review the Georgian situation in the context of partial freedom of choice (i.e., a context in which society has a limited influence on political decisions).

However, in light of the intense fights and polarization, the main directions of state policy and the character of the reforms have not significantly changed in the last 20 years. The government and oppositional forces have changed, but these changes had only a limited impact on the direction of the country's development and its interpretation. This indicates that the government's agenda of decisions was not significantly influenced by the political fight. Other factors, such as globalization, regional geopolitics, the

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<sup>7</sup> Television is also one of the main determinants of political behavior; see chapter 5.

market and sociocultural transformation, have had a much greater influence.

Does populist polyarchy represent the essence of normative democracy? If a political system reveals the will of the people, it can be called a democracy. Georgia's competitive and (more or less) free elections seem to tend toward this classification. By contrast, if elections are held but the country remains governed by the dominant discourse, then the will expressed through elections is not the same as the popular will. Agenda manipulation allows the minority to create changeable electoral coalitions, which provide short-term victories through dynamic representation. Such manipulation is really effective for long periods of time. But the possibilities provided by agenda manipulation are not endless; people's trust in the actors decreases as the competitive environment creates new faces that eventually take the leaders' places. Rulers change, but the political system does not.

We did not aim to determine the causes of such transformation. However, we can say that the openness of the political system to external influences gives it a new character. Neoliberal globalization creates preconditions for such openness and puts agenda-setting power above the internal logic of the political system. Georgia, which considers itself to be a Western periphery, presents new trends more clearly than any European democracy does because internal economic, social and political logics continue to play important roles in Europe.

"The problem is choice", says Neo (in the movie "The Matrix"). Indeed, if the citizen's choice is limited by the interpretation that dominates the public space, then choice does not actually exist. Negative freedoms may not turn into positive possibilities. For an open political system, and especially for a peripheral country, this issue is particularly relevant; its population is essentially living "someone else's life" and building future "communism". A government can transform a formally democratic system into an authoritarian regime simply by capturing the dominant agenda and thereby occupying the central position in the system. In such circumstances, an active society starts to fight for its own interpretation, which becomes the main essence of public policy. In sum, the growth of populism might not indicate the authoritarian degeneration of democracy but rather represent the radical extension of its scope and the actualization of the fight for the expansion of choice.

## CHAPTER 4

### The 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Recession of Democracy or New Type of Democracy?

*Lia Mezvrishvili*

That political parties are the main actors of democracy is taken for granted by people born in the twentieth century. We find it difficult even to draw an analytical line between these two phenomena (democracy and political parties). It is hard to imagine that democracy used to function without political parties and that the interests of the people were represented in accordance with a very different principle. We find it virtually unimaginable that at some point in history, the principle of representation did not exist and each citizen directly participated in governance. However, the hardest things to imagine are that political parties may become anachronisms in the not-very-distant future and that political processes may change drastically. Nevertheless, these very issues are increasingly discussed by political scientists and sociologists.

We will attempt to present a brief history of democratic transformation and *peek* into the future to address the following questions: Where is democracy headed? What recent trends do scholars discern in democratic transformation? What is the situation in this regard in Georgia?

Are we on the same path of evolution trodden by consolidated democracies before us, or has the new and powerful wave of globalization and the worldwide information space made us part of the new global trends?

#### Political Theories of Representation

Representation, as the main form of the exercise of political power, may be viewed as a characteristic of modern times.

Direct democracy was the form of political life and political power in ancient Greece, where the *demos* (people) were sovereigns who participated in the common governance of city matters and engagement in political life was considered a mandatory obligation in the life of a citizen.<sup>1</sup> The assembly, which comprised most citizens with the right to vote, constituted the main sovereign body of the city.

Decisions made at assembly sessions were implemented by magistrates,

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<sup>1</sup>A male over the age of twenty years qualified as a citizen.

who were authorized persons chosen by lottery, whereas generals were elected based on their abilities. Selection by lottery was deemed a true democratic principle, whereas an election based on one's abilities was viewed as an oligarchic principle.

This type of political system represented an attempt to strike a balance between the equality of chances and outcomes, which is in fact one of the dilemmas of democracy.

The democratic principles found in classical antiquity<sup>2</sup> descended into oblivion for a long period of time in the subsequent history of Europe. The notion of equality among the *demos*, all active citizens, was replaced in medieval Christian Europe with the idea of equality before God and theocratic teaching about an earthly hierarchy.

The revival of democratic traditions in Europe traces its roots back to the development of Italian cities after the eleventh century. Unlike agrarian Europe, urban economies drew on commerce and manufacturing, which laid the foundation of a different style of governance and political identity.

When discussing the Italian city-states of the Renaissance period, scholars draw an analogy between these cities and Roman oligarchic governance rather than Greek democracy. The Italian city-state was municipal self-governance administered by republicans of wealthy and aristocratic descent. A representative of the aristocratic class would be nominated for office in the city's governing body only after his candidacy had been reviewed by the city's aristocracy.<sup>3</sup> The heads of households with taxable property were eligible to run for office.

Italian cities in the Renaissance period also believed elections to be an extremely elite form of representation. Consequently, attempts were made to implement the lottery system that had been tested and proved in ancient

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<sup>2</sup> In the Roman Republic, which combined elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, the volume of property was the main factor in determining citizenship. Censuses would be conducted in Rome to categorize citizens by hierarchical rank. In addition to property, the physical, ethical, and social abilities of citizens served as criteria for ranking. Social mobility was allowed because the results of censuses were occasionally renewed after each new census. Poorer citizens were also entitled to vote, but votes were counted by social strata, which gave priority to the votes of wealthier citizens. Although they were not allowed to be nominated for office, representatives of the lower social strata participated in the election of magistrates. The vote count would start with the votes of individuals in the higher social stations. If the vote failed to reveal a majority, it would stop. Thus, the lower social classes could serve as arbitrators only in cases of disagreement or conflict within the upper classes.

<sup>3</sup> After the fall of the Medici House at the end of the fifteenth century, the controlling function of the aristocracy in elections weakened.

Greece. Representation in many cities involved a mix of elections and lottery. For example, the nominators of election candidates in Venice were determined by lottery. The principle of the lottery was viewed as the introduction of an egalitarian dimension into the election process—the lottery weakened the influence of powerful groups on the nomination of candidates. Machiavelli also gave priority to this mixed model, which allowed for a confluence of the interests of different social strata, including both the rich and the poor (Held, 2006).

This type of governance institutionalized the constant conflict of interests, and the institutionalization of conflict is the foundation of freedom.

Thus, the foundation of freedom involves not only self-governance or the willingness to participate in political life but also the translation of conflict into a political system.

Disputes over whether lottery or election was a more democratic principle of selection emerged as an important topic in the political theory of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. French republicanism and French theoreticians, such as Montesquieu and Rousseau, tied true democracy to the lottery system because they believed that the lottery system provided every citizen with an equal opportunity to serve his country. From this perspective, the lottery system reflects true democracy and egalitarianism, whereas elections result in elected aristocracy. In one respect or another, an elected citizen is invariably more skillful and superior to an average statistical citizen. According to Rousseau and Montesquieu, the danger that inept people would end up in government, which was one of the risks related to the lottery principle, had to be regulated by other balancing institutions.

Interestingly, during and after the French Revolution, political actors in England, France, and America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries never gave serious thought to election by lottery to form political bodies. Instead, democratic development was based on representative institutions (Manin, 1997).

The principle of elective representation was more acceptable to Anglo-Saxon political thought<sup>4</sup> than to continental Europe. In English political culture, competence was considered to be of greater value than egalitarianism. The Tories and the Whigs agreed that those elected should hold a higher social status than the electorate.

The principle of the exclusiveness of those elected was echoed by the

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<sup>4</sup> Bernard Manin cites certain distinct features of English political culture. In particular, social prestige and respect for social hierarchy were some of the core characteristics of the historical and cultural landscape in Britain.



American Republicans; however, unlike its British counterpart, this approach was not so hierarchical in character. The Republicans required that representatives be different than their constituents and that power be entrusted to those who possess most wisdom and most virtue. According to Madison, a republic differs from a democracy because the governing body in a republic is not only elected but meritocratic as well (Manin, 1997). The election of natural aristocracy as representatives was a principle shared by the American founding fathers.<sup>5</sup>

Political theories also discuss other issues related to representation, such as the degree of freedom a representative should have from the dictate of the electorate. British tradition vests representatives with greater freedom than its French counterpart. Bentham believed that voters should only be allowed to influence their representatives by their right not to reelect them (Manin, 1997). Instead of complying with the will of voters, a representative must follow his conscience and act in line with his competence. English legislation did not set limits for representatives in this regard. Delivering on promises, however, was a deep-rooted social norm with powerful informal mechanisms of control. In France, occasional institutions would be established to help voters exercise control over representatives. American voters were authorized to instruct representatives, although this right was not legally guaranteed.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, certain changes were made to the system of representation with a view toward ensuring its democratization. In particular, voting rights were enhanced and property qualifications for candidates were abolished.

The foregoing involves a stage in the European history of representation identified as *parliamentarianism*, wherein the main principle of representation was regional representation. The following stage in the history of representation marked the emergence of political parties and party democracy. Today, discussions revolve around a possible crisis of party democracy and the birth of new forms of representation.

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<sup>5</sup> Property qualifications for representatives existed in England and France, although they failed to gain a foothold in America. Researchers assert that the American founding fathers could not reach an agreement on this issue and thus it was never resolved.

### Sociological Theories of Representation

Unlike political theories of representation, which are characterized by normative disputes that focus on better or more egalitarian forms of democracy, sociological theories seek to uncover ties between society and the political system. The classical theory of *cleavages* developed by Lipset and Rokkan attempts to explain how conflicts and tensions in society translate into political systems.

Lipset and Rokkan present two main functions of parties. The first is to crystallize and make explicit conflicting interests within society; the second is an instrumental function

“they force the spokesmen for the many contrasting interests and outlooks to strike bargains, to stagger demands and to aggregate pressures” (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, p. 5).

Do parties’ representative activities coincide with the pre-existing cleavages in society? According to Lipset and Rokkan, all parties must cross established cleavages to create common fronts with potential enemies and opponents. Lipset and Rokkan explore the nature of conflicts and the means of their translation in cleavages and political parties.

During the first stages of nation building, conflicts tend to focus not on general policies but on patronage and influences in local places. For example, in Britain, the heads of independent landed families in the counties opposed the powers of the central administration in London.

“... Stakes to be gained or lost were personal and concrete rather than collective and general” (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, p. 11).

During the early stages of industrialization, cleavages were cultural and religious and represented opposition between the traditional, orthodox-fundamentalist outlooks of peasantry and the more secular attitudes of cities. Nordic countries, Britain, France and North America best illustrate these tendencies.

After two revolutions (Britain and France), antagonism between nation-states and churches went far beyond economic issues. Nation-states struggled to penetrate traditionally religious domains: norms and morals, marriage, divorce, the handling of deviants, charity and the arrangement of funerals. The most decisive battle was for control of education. Catholic and protestant churches managed to create sophisticated political networks of associations and institutes

that allowed their followers to participate in political processes; these networks gradually broadened into cultural opposition to urban secular strata and the growing processes of nation-building, cross-national standardization and bureaucratization. For example, one movement established itself as the Christian People's party in Norway. The population could choose a side on the dimension of values and cultural identities.

The industrial revolution created another dimension that enabled citizens to choose sides in accordance with economic interests. Lipset and Rokkan describe two alignments in the economic dimension: rural-urban and worker-employer. In Britain, in the early stages of the industrial revolution, the Conservative-Liberal conflict was fed by the rural-urban alignment. In the rural-urban alignment, the growth of international trade generated strains between local producers and merchants and entrepreneurs in cities; the Conservative-Liberal conflict involved a struggle for political influence and reflected an opposition between two value orientations: status gained through family connections and status obtained through achievement and enterprise.

In conjunction with new waves of industrialization, employer/employee cleavages deepened. The intensity of working class movements depended on a variety of factors.<sup>6</sup> In Europe, leftist movements manifested themselves as a strongly anti-systemic force. One of the most important factors that contributed to the reduction of ideological strain after World War II in Europe was the incorporation of leftist parties into the existing political system.

The historical conflicts that created the cleavages were described above. The important sociological issue is the means by which existing sociocultural oppositions were translated into and represented by the party system. In other words, is the constellation of political parties a mirror image of pre-existing cleavages?

According to Lipset and Rokkan, there are many specific factors that influence the process of shaping political systems in different countries. This theory proposes a multi-factorial model to trace the path by which existing cleavages were incorporated into the political system. Every political system (polity) produces conditions that are conducive or detrimental to the creation of new systemic political actors. The following questions may contribute to a better understanding of the process: How are protests and grievances traditionally handled? Are protests considered legitimate or conspiratorial? Are

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<sup>6</sup> According to Lipset and Rokkan, the opportunity for vertical social mobility was one of the crucial factors shaping leftist movements in Europe and America. Due to cultural and geographical factors, American workers had much greater prospects of moving into the middle class. In nineteenth-century Europe, status markers and barriers were much higher.

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there any channels through which new movements can receive status through elections, or does the new movement need to join older movements to be incorporated into the political system? The conditions for the development of distinctive parties varied from country to country within Europe.

Thus, Lipset and Rokkan explore the conditions of translating preexisting cleavages into a party system.

Lipset and Rokkan believed that the political system of the 1960s inadequately addressed sociocultural changes.

“The party system of the 1960s reflect ... cleavage structures of the 1920s. ... the party alternatives are older than the majorities of the national electorates” (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, p. 50).

The late 1960s showed “...an increasing disenchantment with the top political leadership and with the established system of decision making, whatever the party coloring of the current inhibitors” (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, p. 56).

### **Crisis of the Party Democracy – Representation Fails**

Representative democracy, in which parties compete for the votes of certain social strata, was believed to be the apex of stability in the early twentieth century.

As mentioned above, in the 1960s, Lipset and Rokkan noted that Europe's party democracy, which no longer reflected processes within society, was incongruent with the interests of actual groups within postindustrial society. The established structure of political actors at the beginning of the twentieth century had undergone only minor changes over the previous decades. Once established, the system itself tried to maintain the existing equilibrium. Consequently, existing channels of representation impeded the translation of new trends into the political system because such trends were viewed as potentially dangerous innovations that threatened the equilibrium of the system. The system has established routines and instinctively tries to protect itself from novelties that endanger existing red tape, which is why urgent issues are excluded from the system's agenda. A system based on political parties is very inflexible and hinders necessary changes. Scholars have also discussed the blurred distinction between parties and the bureaucratic system, which has caused a lack of clarity about who represents whose interests and has generated concern that parties are turning into representatives of the bureaucracy's interests.

In the early 1960s, Daniel Bell's *end of ideology* theory became the trend

of the day, which triggered a series of empirical studies in political sociology.

According to Bell, by the 1950s, all previously existing ideological narratives had been exhausted. Fundamental changes took place in capitalist society, causing the erosion of the existing class structure. Emancipation<sup>7</sup> and technological changes caused the recession of so-called family capitalism. Due to the increasingly complicated systems of entrepreneurship and organization management, the professional-managerial class, with its own requirements, rose to prominence.

In addition, social processes were influenced by substantial changes to the form of capitalist enterprise. Two-thirds of the companies in the United States of America no longer belonged to one person or family; corporate entrepreneurship was the dominant form of ownership. Property rights and control functions were separated. Shareholders composed a very pluralistic group – the homogenous class of capitalists had become extinct. Modern industrial society is a society of capitalists without functions and of functionaries (managers) without capital (Dahrendorf, 1959).

Because the conflict between labor and capital was institutionalized, political affiliation based on class has grown weaker. In postmodern society, social mobility increased quickly between generations, which significantly compromised the ties between social classes and political parties. Certain sociologists believe that a homogenous, static class has become a heuristic fiction. If one brother is an unqualified worker, another is a businessperson, and the third is a doctor, the class to which this family belongs is unclear. In a world where rapid vertical social mobility is a reality, an individual is no longer permanently boxed into a particular social stratum. This type of freedom makes the processes of group solidarity and antagonism dependent on context.

Sociologists seek a model that reflects modern society more adequately than the class model.

Class-based political identity and voting behavior have grown weaker, and no identity is defined using deterministic terms anymore. In addition, the growing secularization of society has undermined traditional religious divides.

Old social identity is collapsing, and new segmented and variable identities are emerging. Postmodernism, sometimes referred to as the cultural logic of late capitalism, views modern social architecture as a construction of modern lifestyles and consumer practices. Workers in the early industrial era were easily identified by their clothing and speech patterns. Today, consumer practices are not as strongly related to class. Currently, all classes are more or

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<sup>7</sup> Due to women's emancipation and the collapse of the patriarchal way of life in society, the prospects of dynastic marriages weakened.

less engaged in mass culture, which is one of factors behind the deterioration of the social class mindset; the sense of class is being replaced with a sense of identity or similarity.

Today, social and demographic variables no longer have sufficient predictive potential in marketing and sociological surveys. Instead, more complex indexes are being created.<sup>8</sup> The economic dimension of social stratification is no longer the most important dimension. To explain social and political behavior, including voting behavior, the membership of all status groups must be taken into account. As sociologists emphasize, the social and demographic model of electoral behavior is losing its grip and all traditional cleavages (e.g., class, religion, urban/rural) are growing weaker. The electorate of parties now congregates around new axes, such as environmentalism, human rights, sexual and reproductive behavior, and immigration, among others. The existing ideological division does not necessarily match the number of axes offered by the era of globalization. The only cleavage that has maintained its predictive potential is the racial and ethnic divide. In the United States, race and ethnicity remain important factors in voting behavior (Dalton, 1996). New nationalist and populist movements are emerging around these cleavages in European countries as well.

The growth of the welfare state, discretionary income, the middle class and the number of white-collar workers in Western societies raises the issue of promoting post-materialist values (Inglehart, 1977). Citizens are taking a greater interest in environmentalism, spiritualism, citizenship, human rights, and other values that do not have distinct party ownership. Social movements, along with interest groups, are vying strongly with political parties to represent the interests of social groups. A wide range of intercultural and interclass identities has emerged to represent those for whom traditional political parties no longer suffice. Identification with a class or a party has been replaced by affiliation with new associations and social movements.

In postindustrial society, important changes have been made to bureaucratic governance as well.

In the 1980s,<sup>9</sup> a new post-bureaucratic paradigm referred to as NPM (new public management) gained momentum. This new doctrine emerged as a stylish gold standard in public management. The main characteristic of the administrative system corresponding to party democracy was that politicians

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<sup>8</sup>These composite indices are known as lifestyle indices.

<sup>9</sup> Because of the severe economic recession in the 1970s, the budget deficit of Western countries skyrocketed and society felt a growing need to have a more effective, affordable, and transparent bureaucracy.

were in charge of important decision making and bureaucrats implemented their decisions. In contrast, the new doctrine involves a public sphere governed by professional managers in accordance with private company management principles. The relations between the state and the citizens are replaced by relations between service providers and consumers.

Efficiency, not political expediency, has become the main decision-making criteria. Because public management has become increasingly complex, many functions are no longer fulfilled directly by the government but are performed by a network of organizations created around the government. This network includes professional agencies, interest groups and private companies. Democratic processes may be replaced by a balance between the interests of these groups. Private, public, and self-government institutions are managed by similar principles.

The hierarchical political structure of decision-making has been largely supplanted by a decentralized corporation consisting of public and private agencies and acting in accordance with horizontal principles. As a rule, this decentralized process is extremely fragmented and barely visible to the electorate (Papadopoulos, 2002). The characteristic system of accountability in party democracy is incongruent with the growing complexity of political processes. Researchers often note the problems pertinent to the relation between government and governance. It is an absurd situation when accountable elected persons make no decisions. Devaluation of *political* deepens, and people increasingly ask questions along the lines of “What are political parties doing after all?” or “What do political parties really do?”

“Does it make sense to hold formally elected officials, who are the most visible but not necessarily the most powerful part of the decisional chain, accountable if effective authority is largely out of their hands? Pluralist democracy is poorly equipped to deal with the increasing complexity of the links between the political system (assuming that this system is horizontally and vertically unified among decisional bodies), and other social subsystems” (Papadopoulos, 2002, p.56).

There are two ways to consider this process. One could use normative and ideological terms to describe it as a process of crippling public interests and the weakening of traditional representative party democracy, or one could describe the process using more neutral terms. In particular, changes of this kind are defined by the development and complexity of modern society. Positive signs may also be discerned in this process; for example, society has exhibited an increasing ability to organize horizontally.

The ongoing changes in education and media communications are following paths similar to the changes in the stratification structure of society and in bureaucratic governance. Political parties are shedding the functions they successfully fulfilled in the first half of the twentieth century. For example, parties used to fulfill the function of communicating information to and educating voters. They developed a platform that acted as a heuristic tool for the electorate and eased navigation in the complex realm of political issues. Political parties also forged a sense of identity and belonging<sup>10</sup> that protected society from extremist ideas and the demagoguery of accidental leaders.

As organizations, political parties played a crucial role in the formation of political elites and in the articulation of voters' interests in the form of political discourse. In effect, political parties served as links between the voters and the political system. Due to the growing level of education in modern society, most voters no longer need to use party positions as heuristic tools and thus the educational role of parties is growing weaker. In addition, this role has to some extent been taken over by the media.

Surveys conducted in the United States of America confirm an increase in the percentage of highly educated citizens among interviewees who consider themselves independent (i.e., not affiliated with a particular political party). In addition, these interviewees are better acquainted with political processes and possess more information about politics (Dalton, 2000).

Electoral volatility is the empirical indicator used to measure the strength of the connection between the electorate and the parties. Surveys reveal that electoral volatility has increased in eighteen developed countries since the 1970s. In addition, greater numbers of voters engage in vote splitting, that is, voting for the candidate of one party in the presidential election and voting for a representative of the other party in the congressional election. Approximately one-sixth of voters engaged in this practice in the 1960s; by the 1990s, one-fourth of the electorate practiced vote splitting.

In addition, voters make decisions about their partisan preferences in an increasingly short time span. Empirical studies reveal that growing numbers of voters make relevant decisions during election campaigns.

Another indicator of the weakening influence of political parties is the weakening participation of volunteers in election campaigns. In the past two decades, monetary contribution from citizens to campaigns has increased,

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<sup>10</sup> For example, the British Conservative Party emphasizes local activities to promote a sense of party affiliation. Voters' clubs, pubs, and similar entities affiliated with the Conservative Party operate in rural Britain.



whereas volunteer activities have decreased. Researchers assert that the electorate today is more of an observer than a participant. The willingness to participate in political life is steadily decreasing. Before the television era, parties needed a solid foundation of members and volunteers to ensure successful election campaigns; today, such a foundation is unnecessary because of the development of technology (television and internet). In addition, the number of local party organizations has been dropping in Western democracies.

Election campaigns are becoming increasingly expensive and centralized. In the era of television, propaganda targeting class groups has been replaced by a type of communication with wider target audiences, that is, not limited to one particular social group. New “catch-all”<sup>11</sup> party campaigns target all types of voters, and political parties employ election rhetoric that targets the so-called median voter, which indicates the diminished role of ideological differences and the convergence of platforms.<sup>12</sup>

The practice of hiring professionals during elections is common. Opinion polls have emerged as one of the core technologies of elections. Campaigns pay less attention to communicating ideological positions and more attention to creating a leader’s image and crafting effectively packaged messages concerning salient issues. Leaders’ debates in the era of television often play a decisive role in determining election results. This age of political campaigns implies that it is possible to shape public opinion, and the goal of a successful campaign is to sell its message.

Television campaigns have weakened the traditional ideological and representational politics and have strengthened the agenda-setting component.

Has the development of the internet and social media changed television democracy? Is it true that cyber-democracy differs in essence from television democracy?

Some researchers believe that with the development of the internet and social media, the processes that have taken place in consumer markets have also occurred in politics. In particular, the rapid development of communication technology and direct contact with voters’ groups has brought about a greater segmentation of the electoral market. In addition, new communication technologies have made it easier to tailor messages to different groups.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “Catch-all” is Otto Kirchheimer’s description (1966) of a party that tries to appeal to a wider audience at the expense of ideology

<sup>12</sup> This process occasionally goes far enough to blur the distinction between the platforms of different parties. For example, commentators sarcastically refer to Tony Blair’s *New Labors* as *Old Conservatives*.

<sup>13</sup> Consumer groups are not grouped by clear *class* characteristics but by lifestyle, that is, the above-mentioned structural index of postmodern generation.

This type of campaign is less inclined to believe in the feasibility of shaping public opinion. Instead of creating political tastes, it adapts to the existing tastes of different social groups (Farrell and Webb, 2000).

Increasingly, this process requires the participation of pollsters,<sup>14</sup> marketing experts, and other professionals to ensure the successful coordination of campaigns and efficient adaptation to consumer needs. Politicians are no longer the central figures in election processes because they are increasingly being replaced with expensive technocrats. This substantially new wave of election campaigns does not imply that political parties set political preferences. Rather, they adapt to existing preferences. This process reveals the necessity of permanent political opportunism, which ultimately undermines the reputation of political parties. It is expected that the role of the virtual world in forging political processes will continue to grow, as evidenced by the Arab Spring events, which did not emphasize the role of political parties at all.

Online social networks offer the public unprecedented means of horizontal cooperation but do not promote the establishment of relatively solid groups. Groups are being created and dissolved around particular issues. Flexible and issue-based politics are replacing politics based on the representation of social groups.

Researchers are debating the sustainability of the above-described trend of ideology devaluation in politics. Is the convergence of party platforms to focus on the median voter irreversible, or is it a temporary trend? For example, traditional ideological polarization grew stronger under the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and Barak Obama. Interestingly, under Barak Obama, polarization transcended the party system and manifested itself through powerful public movements.<sup>15</sup>

What is the future of electoral behavior? Will the traditional cleavages weaken?<sup>16</sup> Certain sociologists believe that issue-based *retrospective* voting behavior, which focuses on leaders' images and the assessment of ruling parties, is already in place (Dalton, 1996). Retrospective voting behavior does not require special information on ideological issues. Instead, voters unfamiliar with

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<sup>14</sup>Views differ with respect to the use of opinion polls as a tool of electoral competition. Some believe that polling process itself plays the role of agenda-setter and manipulates public opinion. However, there is no denying that public opinion is an agenda setter for politicians. In light of growing political marketing trends under the cyber-democracy, the second aspect (manipulation of public opinion) becomes especially important.

<sup>15</sup>Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street.

<sup>16</sup> The global/local axis is growing stronger in the Western world. In recent years, immigration and other issues related to this axis have played an important role in elections.

ideologies can independently assess the government's past performance. This type of voting behavior strengthens the principle of accountability, which has gradually replaced the principle of representation in politics (as discussed in greater detail later in this volume).

### **Economic Globalization and Party Democracy**

Until the 1970s, the concept of state sovereignty was taken as an axiom in democracy and representation theories. This concept maintains that the state is a closed system and that the main political actors conduct their discretionary activities within that system.

However, increasing globalization has drastically transformed this situation by setting certain restrictions on political actors within their own states. The growth of international organizations, international nongovernmental networks, transnational corporations and global risks has greatly tested the limits of discretionary state decision making, even for powerful states.

The jurisdictions of supranational (for example, the European Union) and international organizations have expanded in the modern world. An increasing number of fields of social life are regulated by international law and international agreements. Decision making in certain fields requires legitimization not only at home but also abroad because these decisions have an effect on neighboring (and non-neighboring) states.

When decisions are made on issues such as the construction of nuclear power plants or the fight against drug trafficking, certain questions arise. For example, who has a right to participate in these decisions? How does the state obtain legitimization for national decisions that will have an equally significant impact on neighboring countries?

The most important question raised in the globalized world is the following: Where is the *home* of democracy and representation (Held, 2006). Other questions also emerge in this regard: Who is the real author of legitimization? What is the composition of actors involved in the process of legitimization?

In addition, an important question is raised regarding the issue of party representation: What is the likelihood that the governing party can implement economic policies in line with its own ideological platform if the country is engaged in the global economy? It is traditionally believed that upon assuming power, a party will implement policies that suit and benefit its electorate. The model of rational choice implies that after voting for a particular political party,

the voter expects to benefit from the policies implemented by that party. For example, leftist parties will focus more on increasing employment rates and less on the budget deficit and inflation. In contrast, right-wing parties will strive to benefit businesses and the middle class; thus, their economic policies will aim to maintain a low inflation rates, even at the expense of increased unemployment. In reality, the implementation of certain economic policies constitutes the most important and final link in the process of representation.

According to relevant studies, it has become more difficult to discern such obvious differences between the economic policies of different political parties since the 1970s. The economic processes of a country are increasingly dependent on developments that take place abroad. As a country's engagement in the global economy increases, the influence of external processes on domestic inflation, economic growth, unemployment, and general welfare increases as well.

The ability of political parties to implement policies in line with their ideological platforms has been significantly compromised by the liberalization of financial markets and international trade; international agreements; and participation in international organizations (e.g., the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund). Because Western countries have identified economic growth and stability as their primary objectives, the necessity of ensuring economic growth places transnational capital in a better position compared to the nation states. If a state fails to provide a beneficial environment for financial capital, such capital will easily flow elsewhere, which in turn will have a negative impact on the state's economic growth and the welfare of its citizens. States compete fiercely for investments.

Thus, if a state aims to attract investments, the range of possible economic policies is quite limited. Notwithstanding its ideological platform, the ruling party is compelled to implement a policy that ensures financial stability, an investment-friendly environment, and predictability.

Global politics are adequately addressing this challenge. Since the 1990s, there has been a noticeable devaluation of ideology in the executive branches, which is clearly reflected in the growing autonomy of central banks. Reforms that aim to free central banks from short-term political accountability have been implemented in developed industrial countries. This issue is no longer viewed as political and is not the subject of public debates. In addition, the executive branches responsible for fiscal and monetary policies are freeing themselves from ideological burdens on a regular basis. In the fiscal and monetary fields, adapting to the increasing process of globalization requires

special technocratic expertise, and society agrees that technocrats are far superior to party bureaucrats in this regard.<sup>17</sup>

The deepening process of globalization begs the question of whether the economic policy of the ruling party has become a dependent variable in relation to developments that occur outside the country.

If empirical evidence shows that the ideological platform is not the determinative factor in the economic policy of the ruling party, additional questions will emerge concerning the advisability of party-based democracy.

The results of empirical research into this issue are contradictory and fluctuate between two extremes:

“Politics do not matter at all” and “different parties implement completely different economic policies.” (Caul and Gray, 2000, p. 224).

The results of the study conducted by Caul and Gray are very instructive in this regard. That study sought to assess the extent to which the party composition of government defines public policy directions, whether convergence trends related to economic policies can be identified, and whether the economic policies of ruling parties tend to focus on the median voter.

That study regards the party composition of the executive branch as an independent variable and considered six indicators of public policy (annual inflation rates, unemployment rates, GDP growth, the share of government expenses in GDP, the share of welfare and the share of defense expenses in GDP) as dependent variables.

Did the study confirm correlations that could have been formulated based on theoretical literature? In particular, did it confirm that rightist governments maintain low welfare costs and high defense costs, whereas leftist governments tend to maintain high rates of employment and inflation? Based on the aggregate results from 18 sovereign states, it appears that, contrary to

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<sup>17</sup> This tendency, in its relatively pure form, manifested itself in the post-communist societies of Eastern Europe. After the Velvet Revolutions in the 1990s, neither traditional (historically solid) political capital nor a wealthy class existed in these countries. Instead, governance projects were implemented by a technocracy that owned human capital. Researchers (Szelenyi and Townsley, 2000) characterize this period of development as *post-communist managerialism*. In the late 1990s, persons involved in financial management, ministries of finance, and experts for international financial organizations – not political parties – held real power. The power of financial experts did not draw on the representation of particular groups but rather stemmed from knowledge of the mechanisms of functioning global capitalism. Admittedly, the source of power in this case was human capital, namely, technocratic expertise. The technocratic trend in politics was also reflected in the 2014-2015 developments in Ukraine, when foreign nationals were invited to assume important political offices.

expectations, the study failed to identify consistent patterns. The chronological picture by country is quite inconsistent. In Germany, there is a significant statistical connection between the partisan composition of government and government policy. However, few statistically significant links were identified in other countries and trends contrary to those expected were recorded in nine countries.<sup>18</sup>

Out of the 108 correlation coefficients analyzed in that study, only 18 provided statistically significant evidence to substantiate the relation between the partisan composition of government and the nature of government policy. In certain countries, although hypotheses about possible relations between the partisan composition of government and economic policies were confirmed at certain points in history, distinct patterns were not found.

That study introduced a number of new variables that reflect the influence of exogenous economic shocks and global trends on internal government expenses and economic efficiency. Data analysis revealed that the influence of exogenous factors on the economic policies of governments was just as strong as that of endogenous factors. In addition, structural factors emerged in OECD countries (e.g., population ageing, immigration and engagement in the global economy) that further limited the range of acceptable alternative economic policies and the discretion of the ruling party. Due to globalization-related factors, the governments of industrial countries find it difficult to maintain ideological platforms when formulating and implementing economic policies.

Thus, economic globalization is yet another factor undermining the traditional party democracy of the twentieth century.<sup>19</sup>

A fundamental question arises in relation to the previously described crisis of party-based representation: What are *politics* and what is *political* when current conditions demand the de-politicization of traditional political topics?

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<sup>18</sup>For example, when a right-wing centrist coalition was in power in Sweden, GDP growth was low and government and welfare expenses were high. A connection that supported said hypothesis was found between 1981 and 1995, when right-wing governments maintained low inflation rates while unemployment rates increased.

<sup>19</sup> Researchers often ask whether the transnational corporation has become the most powerful global actor and whether there exists a force capable of balancing this power. International NGO networks are often regarded as such a force (Held, 2000).

### Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: How does the public address the “impaired” democracy?

Due to the tendencies described above, certain researchers believe that the political processes that characterize today’s Western democracies substantially differ from the processes that existed prior to the 1980s. Contemporary processes have been characterized as “post-democracy” (Crouch, 2004), “counter-democracy” (Rosanvallon, 2008), “populist democracy” and “audience democracy” (Manin, 1997), among other terms. Some scholars believe that the current situation may be described as a crisis, or recession, of democracy.

Viewing “post-democracy” as a crisis of democracy stems from a *normative* speculation that one form of democracy (party democracy) is superior to others. A rejection of this evaluative approach gives rise to certain reasonable questions. For example, can the weakening of party democracy be characterized as a crisis of democracy? A crisis of party-based democracy may be viewed not as a crisis of democracy but rather as an incompatibility between public demands and the party-based form of representation and as the possible emergence of a new form of democracy.

The strengthening of political parties was questioned in the past, and their rise to prominence was considered a crisis of the traditional parliamentary democracy. However, several decades later, party-based democracy was lauded as the apex of democratic evolution.

The previous chapter describes the factors that caused the weakening of political parties in the postindustrial era. Later, we will try to describe different forms of interest articulation and channels used by Western society in damaged party-based democracies.

Scholars note that the development of communication technology creates new opportunities for the *return* of so-called direct democracy. The Arab Spring has become a textbook case of how political processes are managed without political parties. In Western countries, more issues are being solved through referenda.

Some researchers espouse the idea that citizens have grown apolitical and apathetic during the postmodern era. However, an alternative assessment of social processes suggests that the public has not become apathetic but rather has altered the forms of civil and political expression. Although voter turnout has decreased, the number of protest participants, petition signatories and solidarity rally members has grown. Although the number of party aspirants has decreased, new associations and interest groups are being created. Citizens are looking outside the party-based representative system to find new ways of

articulating their interests and concerns, which may indicate a growing social distance between civil society and established political institutions. One of the characteristics of civil movements is that they are democratic in essence but do not pursue political goals. In this sense, a form of nonpolitical civil democracy may be emerging.

There are many views and assessments of the processes related to civil democracy. For example, Rosanvallon characterizes the essence and features of civil democracy as “counter-democracy”, which is the negative sovereignty of civil society and is reflected in both the increasing distrust of government and the diverse methods used to articulate this distrust.

Today, a vigilant citizen who is critical of the government is more valuable than a citizen who votes. Since the 1980s, this aspect of citizenship has grown increasingly strong. Unlike traditional movements and interest groups, which sought to represent particular interests, the new movements aim to supervise the government. Consequently, new systems have emerged and a new actor, the social watchdog, has appeared.<sup>20</sup> Whistle-blowing has become so widespread that a new field of sociology has emerged to study it. The goal of this type of organization is not to defend interests but to raise issues and to force the government to act.

These constant assessments and criticisms are decentralized. They are conducted through the media, think-tanks, committees, and polls. Interestingly, the goal of these institutions is not to gain power/authority but to expand the sphere of influence.

“It is a quasi-institution – invisible and decentralized, to be sure, but still capable of exerting significant influence on outcomes. Political scientists speak of an agenda-setting function: even if the media have little ability to change people’s basic beliefs, they can play a decisive role in setting the agenda of social debate. Vigilance thus helps to define the political arena and establish government priorities. Hence, it turns out to be more effective than many types of institutionalized participation. By exercising vigilance, the public helps to regulate political decision-making” (Rosanvallon, 2008, p. 40).

The demand for transparency of political processes has increased in civil

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<sup>20</sup>Issues related to the civil oversight of government were considered urgent before the twenty-first century but were mainly solved institutionally, within the system. For example, government performance was overseen by parliament. The main purpose of liberal democracy was to prevent inadequate performance on the part of the state.



society, and transparency has become one of the most important issues on the agenda. The growing role of investigative journalism and a constant threat of political scandal has been institutionalizing since the 1970s. Public exposure of politicians also serves to consolidate social norms. This demand for transparency may be related to the rejection of political ideology. Specifically, the rejection of political ideology has personalized politics and promoted the importance of confidence in particular politicians. In a democracy of distrust, personal symbolic capital becomes more important than loyalty to ideological principles.

In this respect, contemporary democracies bear a curious resemblance to older societies that were regulated by honor. Indeed, honor is a form of symbolic capital and is constituted by social judgment (Rosanvallon, 2008)

One form of civil oversight is the assessment of government. Since the 1970s, assessment has acquired increasingly refined forms. Numerous civic organizations and agencies that specialize in assessing government performance have emerged, as have international organizations that assign countries ratings in different fields. Increasingly, citizens are demanding that government officials prove their competence and are subjecting officials' actions to regular evaluation.

Visibility is an important precondition of functioning civic organizations. Therefore, the media, civil movements and civil organizations have become the most influential actors in a democracy of distrust.

A conflict over legitimacy ensues. For example, who has the right to control the government: parliament or civil movements and the media? Civil movements are now able to obtain "empirical legitimacy."

For decades, the political opposition has fulfilled the function of controlling the government. What prevents it from fulfilling this purpose today? In the postindustrial era, social fragmentation has deepened. Political parties find it increasingly difficult to mobilize public opinion under their umbrellas. Public opinion is relatively amorphous, and it is more capable of recognizing what it dislikes than it is of formulating ambitious goals.

Rosanvallon claims that the project of political power, which maintained relative stability for 200 years, has ended. The nature of elections has changed. Today, elections signify the right to veto, not the right to elect. Today, elections are not an arena in which to discuss future orientation; rather, discussions revolve around the possible disqualification of the government in charge. In recent decades, instances of presidential reelection have decreased in the United States, which may be viewed as an empirical manifestation of this process.

Election campaigns now engage to a greater extent in "assaulting" opponents and in negative campaigns. Election campaigns seem to focus

primarily on preventing opponents from assuming power rather than on winning the election.

Negative politics are characterized by a certain structural simplicity. It is much easier to go up against wearisome duties than to work on a fair tax system.

Some also link this process to the end of the Cold War, after which the structuring of election processes around two models weakened. Meta narratives about future transformations no longer inspire voters. Increasingly, citizens opt for the roles of watchdogs and censors.

In light of the foregoing, it may be stated that democratic activity has acquired a fundamentally new form and transcends the field of representation. Right-wing or left-wing opposition forces no longer adequately reflect the diversity of political issues. Citizens do not believe that one type of politics is better than another. The idealistic belief in revolutionary transformations has lapsed into oblivion. Citizens now assess the various types of politics independently, not as parts of a long narrative.

### **New Populism**

If the recession of party-based democracy is irreversible, then society is facing a period of transition in which old democratic institutions can no longer operate adequately but new institutions have yet to form.

In a sense, this situation threatens to pave the way for so-called populist politics. Scholars note growing populist trends in contemporary Western politics. Theoretical literature offers a number of definitions for populism. Below, we will try to define this term operationally, by its core indicators. What are the empirical manifestations of populism?

First, populism is the rejection of ideological processes tailored to the interests of specific social strata, which is quite characteristic of representative democracy. Instead of a competition between representatives of the interests of different social groups – that is, between parties – political actors try to please a conceptual and mystified person; that is, the “people” who share common interests. Charismatic political actors compete not to represent a group but to obtain a right to speak and govern on behalf of “the people”.

Another manifestation of populism is anti-systemic and anti-elitist attitudes. The dichotomy is between a corrupt elite and the “people” rather than between right wing and left wing.<sup>21</sup> Populist leaders emphasize the growing

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<sup>21</sup>The economic rhetoric of populist nationalist parties is diverse. For example, the rhetoric of Jean-Marie Le Pen was akin to neoliberalism, whereas Marine Le Pen spoke of ethnic

distance between the political establishment and the people and between the political elites and the people.

The image of “the other”, the enemy, is the most important characteristic of populism, which rejects “others” in ethical terms (“wicked”), social terms (“elites”), and ethnic and religious terms (“aliens”, “minorities”, “sectarians”, “immigrants”, “spies”, “One percent - Wall Street”, and so on).

“Populist movements tend to deny horizontal cleavages (such as the Left/Right divide) and to promote the fundamental unity of the people, while introducing a new vertical dimension, which may exclude, for instance, elites at the top and foreigners at the bottom. .... By extension, the populist resentment spreads to the institutions that embody and execute the principle of representation” (Meny and Surel, 2002, p.12).

Scholars disagree about the extent to which populism is the main characteristic of post-democratic (counter-democratic) politics. Some researchers believe that identifying populism with counter-democracy is a misconception (Rosanvallon, 2008). Populism may manifest itself through the extreme radicalization of counter-democratic forms. Certain scholars maintain that populism is not a characteristic of the modern political process but rather a perpetual “specter” of democracy because democracy contains an internal contradiction. As noted by Canovan, democracy refers both to popular participation in politics and to the delivery of politics to the people so that they may see a relatively clear picture of the political situation.

In an autocracy, the location and picture of authority and political power are clear. In a democracy, although people participate in the political process, this process is so complicated and multifaceted that citizens find it difficult to distinguish between political authority and political process. Political process resembles a labyrinth – its outcomes are often accidental and far from rational.

„... the more successful the project of inclusion, the more crowded and congested the political arena, and the harder it is for any particular voter to have a clear picture of democracy” (Canovan, 2002, p. 43).

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socialism. Researchers note that the electorate of nationalist populist parties largely comprises recruits from left-wing parties. It is an electorate that espouses anti-globalist attitudes. Members of the populist electorate deserted left-wing parties because the leftists failed to protect the local labor market from immigrants. The defeat of the Labor Party in the 2015 parliamentary election in England was related to the left-wing Scottish electorate shifting away from it and joining the Scottish National Party.

Consequently, democracy needs ideology as a heuristic tool that helps voters to navigate politics. However, ideology entails the simplification of the political picture onto easily perceptible dogmas, which poses a risk of distorting the picture.

The contradiction between ideology and reality provides a fertile ground for frustrating the masses and thus for the emergence of populism. This is a constant and insolvable paradox that accompanies democracy. Two democratic values, transparency and people's participation (representation) in government, contradict each other.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>The UK political system solves this dilemma in favor of transparency. In contrast, the continental European political system (characterized by proportional representation) favors participation.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Georgia in the Post-Democratic Era

*Lia Mezvrishvili*

The previous chapter discusses developments in the postindustrial West, which can no longer be described in terms of the representation model of party-based democracy.

In this chapter, we will attempt to show that certain processes that can be discerned in Georgian politics differ from the representation-type characteristics of party-based democracy. In Western countries, these features are defined by the state of postindustrial society, whereas in Georgia, they may be the product of the unfinished transformation processes.

We will briefly review the history of political regimes<sup>1</sup> over the past 25 years. We will then introduce the results of a survey conducted prior to the 2013 presidential election.

We will interpret the results of the survey in connection with the developments that were not adequate and akin to the formation of the party based representation in Georgia.

#### 2013 presidential election

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the government of Georgia changed four times. The first Georgian President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, and his *Round Table* movement assumed power under Soviet rule by defeating the Communist Party in the Supreme Council election on October 28, 1990. Ensuring Georgia's independence was the top priority on the agenda of Gamsakhurdia's regime; after announcing Georgia's independence, this regime failed to maintain power for very long. Gamsakhurdia was opposed by the segment of society that placed the liberal transformation of the totalitarian Soviet regime at the top of its agenda. This group regarded Gamsakhurdia's regime as ethnic-religious and autocratic in nature. Mass protests against Gamsakhurdia's regime grew into the armed revolt that ultimately forced him to flee the country.

In 1992, after the toppling of Gamsakhurdia, the new government invited Eduard Shevardnadze to govern the country as the Chairperson of the State

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<sup>1</sup> We define "regime" as set of rules (both formal and informal) established by a government and do not attach a negative connotation to this term.

Council. The first years of Shevardnadze's government were marked by growing tensions in Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. At the same time, the exiled President Gamsakhurdia returned to Georgia and armed factions that supported the ex-president became very active in western Georgian regions.

The state armed forces were defeated<sup>2</sup> in the military operation in Abkhazia, which was followed by the de-facto secession of the two Georgian breakaway regions and a massive migration of internally displaced persons. In addition, the paramilitaries that had allied with Shevardnadze in the fight against Gamsakhurdia's regime caused serious problems in the country.

Following the breakdown of the integrated Soviet economic environment, the initial years of Shevardnadze's rule were characterized by an unprecedented economic collapse and hyperinflation. In 1992, the Georgian economy plummeted by 44 percent.

After several years of civil disorder, Shevardnadze's government succeeded in neutralizing the paramilitary groups and attaining stability. In 1995, the Georgian Constitution was adopted and Shevardnadze won the presidential election, after which he implemented a pro-Western foreign policy. Georgia closely allied with the United States of America and participated in important international energy transportation projects. In 1999, Georgia joined the Council of Europe, and in 2002, Shevardnadze declared that Georgia intended to obtain NATO membership.

Between 1994 and 1996, in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund, radical economic reforms were implemented to transform the economic system and ensure macroeconomic stability. These reforms involved the establishment of fiscal discipline, price and trade liberalization, and far-reaching privatization, among other programs. In addition, with the support of the International Monetary Fund, the Georgian *lari* (GEL) was introduced as the official currency.

These reforms proved to be unfinished and insufficient; the system operated as a mix of incompatible old and new institutions. Consequently, informal networks were established between political and economic actors to promote the interests of different groups. Informal network relations with the regime, as opposed to advantages obtained through fair competition, served as the primary basis of obtaining and accumulating property. In fact, Georgia had no formal state institutions. Corruption at every level of the state bureaucracy was accepted as the norm. According to the International Monetary Fund, in

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<sup>2</sup> Russian military and paramilitary groups informally fought against Georgian troops as well.

1998 and 1999, Georgia had the largest shadow economy (64 percent of GDP) among the post-Soviet states (Schneider and Enste, 2002).

Society largely opposed Shevardnadze's regime under the aegis of the fight against corruption.

Allegations of vote fraud in the November 2003 election prompted mass protest rallies against Shevardnadze's government; these rallies ultimately developed into the Rose Revolution, which marked the end of Shevardnadze's rule.

The leader of this revolution, Mikheil Saakashvili, won the January 2004 presidential election. The first years of Saakashvili's rule were distinguished by the rapid streamlining of the state government and the implementation of reforms directed at economic liberalization,<sup>3</sup> which ultimately produced impressive results. Corruption in state institutions decreased, and state revenues increased from 558 million USD in 2003 to 3.3 billion USD in 2008. In 2007, Georgia's GDP grew by 12.4 percent.

However, other factors contributed to public opposition to Saakashvili's regime. Saakashvili faced a difficult dilemma: The government needed to implement unpopular reforms while simultaneously maintaining public consensus by procuring the participation of both the public and various opposition groups in the political process. Broad public engagement, the process based on democratic principles, was often inconsistent with technical competence and thus impeded reforms.

Saakashvili's regime opted to pursue a policy based on technical competence. With a view toward building and rapidly modernizing state institutions, power was concentrated in the hands of the executive branch. Reforms were rapidly implemented without associated communication campaigns to consolidate public support. Consequently, a significant segment of society came to perceive itself as alienated from these processes or as unjustly victimized.

In addition, Saakashvili's regime believed it was responsible for bringing about mental changes in society (very similar to the Cultural Revolution) that would promote the country's integration into the Western cultural environment. All of these phenomena instilled a sense of danger in the

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<sup>3</sup> Reforms designed to achieve economic liberalization were implemented by a team led by Kakha Bendukidze (the Minister for Reform Coordination). The number of business licenses dropped from 909 to 137. A structural reform was implemented to outsource as many commercial activities as possible to the private sector. The tax regime and the labor code were liberalized.

conservative segment of the public, which perceived opposition to Saakashvili's regime as a fight for national and religious identity.

Saakashvili's regime also failed to establish legal universalism, notwithstanding that in theory, this principle would be expected to correlate<sup>4</sup> with the promotion of economic liberalization. Instead, a segment of society came to believe that a group of bureaucrats existed above the law.

Beginning in 2007, mass protest rallies against Saakashvili's regime decried the injustice in Georgia. Against the backdrop of these demonstrations, conservative and liberal opposition forces united to fight against Saakashvili's rule under the aegis of *democratization*.

Later that year, police raids on a mass demonstration and on an opposition television divided public opinion.<sup>5</sup> President Saakashvili resigned, and a "snap" presidential election was held. However, the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections did not ease public tensions. Opponents of Saakashvili's regime believed that the elections were stolen and thus questioned the legitimacy of the government.

In 2011, preparations for a new parliamentary election commenced. The 2012 parliamentary election was important for Georgia in several respects. In 2010, parliament adopted constitutional amendments that limited presidential power and introduced characteristics of a parliamentary republic to the government. In particular, the prime minister and his cabinet would become the main executive actors. In October 2011, Bidzina Ivanishvili, a Georgian billionaire, made a statement about entering politics. He assembled the *Georgian Dream* Coalition, which combined several relatively influential, albeit ideologically incompatible, opposition parties. The entry of Ivanishvili into politics changed the balance of powers in the country. The National Movement, which previously was considered to be the most powerful political actor, found itself facing a relatively strong opponent rather than weak and scattered opposition groups.

The election season was characterized by numerous confrontations and conspiracies.

Supporters of the National Movement believed that Ivanishvili represented pro-Russian forces and that his possible ascension into power threatened to

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<sup>4</sup> Theoreticians of neoliberalism consider the establishment of legal universalism to be a function of the state apparatus (F. Hayek). Legal universalism is believed to be a mandatory precondition of a fair, competitive and well-functioning market.

<sup>5</sup> Supporters of Saakashvili's regime believed that these actions were consistent with the state's duty to restore law and order in the country. In contrast, their opponents warned of growing authoritarian trends.



divert the country from its pro-Western path. In contrast, Georgian Dream supporters believed that the National Movement planned to keep Saakashvili in power, similar to the Putin<sup>6</sup> scenario in Russia.

### **2012 – a parliamentary election or a cold war?**

Society was extremely polarized. Election campaigns gave the impression that the country was engaged not merely in a parliamentary election but in a *cold* civil war; an existential struggle between good and evil. Supporters of the National Movement and Georgian Dream accused each other of holding *immoral* positions. Moreover, Georgian Dream supporters also labeled individuals who did not hold clear political preferences as immoral. In one of his newspaper interviews, Ivanishvili stated that “No one should stay in the middle.”<sup>7</sup>

Emotional speeches by opposing political leaders were full of distinctly negative symbolism.

Even events that could be categorized as facts were subject to political interpretation during election season. Protest rallies were invariably followed by “fights among cameramen”. Partisan television stations used various camera tricks to make rallies appear larger or smaller. Participants in political debates could not agree on how many people attended one protest rally or another. “Folk” math formulas were created to count the numbers of demonstrators.

Broadcasting or uploading secret recordings onto websites was also used as a weapon in political warfare. As a rule, the context and content of these tapes were extremely equivocal and open to interpretation. Although the public would demand that the authenticity of these recordings be verified, steps taken toward this end would rarely resolve the situation — one party or another would inevitably question the integrity of the organization responsible for verification.

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<sup>6</sup> After serving two terms as president, V. Putin assumed the office of prime minister under President D. Medvedev. Many observers believed that V. Putin was the *de facto* ruler of the country.

<sup>7</sup> The polarization of views along a single dimension is somewhat functional in terms of forming different ideological positions. However, the essence of polarization in Georgian political discourse is quite different.

European ideological discourse is characterized by shared interpretation schemes–paradigms that impart certain meanings to events – and by polarization within these paradigms. Views are polarized along a continuum (for example, the right-left continuum).

In contrast, shared interpretation schemes are difficult to identify in Georgian political discourse. Political debates take the form of monologues. Opponents attempt to delegitimize one another and to prove to the audience that the other party has no right to discuss a given topic.

<sup>8</sup> It is common knowledge that, in general, postmodernist discourse is characterized by significant fragmentation among interpretations. However, in this particular case, a slightly different phenomenon is at issue.

An absurd situation emerged in which political preference was used to determine whether something actually happened, not as a heuristic tool to assist in the interpretation of facts <sup>8</sup>.

The polling industry also found itself entangled in the fierce political battles that took place ahead of elections, including the traditional “ratings war” that is so characteristic of Georgian politics. Contradictory results of opinion polls conducted by different organizations were often published in the public domain. Pollsters associated with different political parties argued and accused one another of wrongdoing in television studios. The polling situation became absurd: instead of arguing about different interpretations of survey results, debates focused on whether the results were simulated. Ultimately, scientific and technical information lost all meaning in Georgian politics. “Independent scholarly arguments” became worthless because nobody believed in their independence.

According to some election observers, the Georgian Dream gained the upper hand after footage showing the practice of torture in prisons was broadcast on television. Citizens reacted by once again taking to the streets, and the previously neutral electorate mobilized against Saakashvili’s regime.

Against the backdrop of this extremely polarized election season and the new wave of mass citizen mobilization, the National Movement lost the 2012 parliamentary elections and the Georgian Dream achieved a parliamentary majority. This result marked the first time since 1990 that a ruling party was defeated in a democratic election, and power was peacefully transferred to an opposition force.

The postelection period was marked by so-called cohabitation, which was an unprecedented event in Georgian history. <sup>9</sup> Saakashvili remained the president of Georgia, and the Georgian Constitution granted him a significant amount of political authority. Nonetheless, the executive power was transferred to the victorious Prime Minister, Ivanishvili, and the Georgian Dream composed the Cabinet. President Saakashvili virtually disowned developments in the country, although he retained his veto power. An unusual picture emerged in Georgia: the president declared himself an opposition force. This stalemate caused no significant destructive political processes; rather, for the most part, the tension manifested itself in procedural clashes.

Nevertheless, the political cohabitation spawned certain public tensions. For example, the emerging uncertainty instilled a sense of stagnation in business circles, and it appeared that the country’s economy had stalled in anticipation of de-escalation.

Thus, although the new Georgian Constitution had stripped the president

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<sup>9</sup> We are describing the pre-election situation in detail because it is an interesting political agenda to study.

of significant executive authority, the next presidential election was widely expected to bring “normalization” to the country.

Before the presidential election, a number of former senior officials were arrested and a blanket amnesty was announced. Following this grant of amnesty, most of those pardoned were deemed political prisoners. The new government tried to find a balance between two mutually exclusive positions. Cohabitation combined with the large National Movement fraction in parliament signified the legitimization of the previous regime and its ruling team and the recognition of their democratic functions. Conversely, the recognition of political prisoners and charges against the leaders of the previous government suggested that the previous regime was autocratic and illegitimate. Clearly, these two approaches were mutually exclusive.

These developments intensified polarization within society and promoted the construction of two drastically different pictures of reality. Certain public figures spoke of democratic improvements, whereas others referred to political persecutions and selective justice. The detained senior officials were referred to as criminals by some and as heroes by others. A certain segment of the public viewed the pardoned detainees as political prisoners whereas others considered them resident spies.

Radical social segments demanded tougher legal measures against representatives of the previous government and insisted on criminalization of the National Movement as a political force. These demands were formulated under the general term *restoration of justice*.

The presidential election was marked by yet another unusual occurrence in Georgian politics. The defeated political party, National Movement, retained much of its electorate and ran in the election using its old party brand.

Several weeks before the presidential election, Ivanishvili announced his intention to resign after the election, which gave additional appeal to the presidential election and further intensified public expectations.

Although dozens of candidates registered to run for presidency, it was clear that only three candidates would ultimately face one another.

The Georgian Dream Coalition nominated then Minister of Education Giorgi Margvelashvili as its presidential candidate. Margvelashvili was not perceived by the public as a political figure. Before Ivanishvili came to power, Margvelashvili was known as an expert activist who gained popularity for his witty criticism of Saakashvili’s government. Margvelashvili reluctantly accepted the office of Education Minister “at the insistence” of Ivanishvili.

It was clear to the public and to the political community that the legitimacy of Margvelashvili’s candidacy stemmed from Ivanishvili’s favorable

opinion of him. No rational argumentation was developed to support Margvelashvili's candidacy.

The National Movement held primary elections in six large Georgian cities and subsequently nominated Davit Bakradze (former Chair of Parliament) as its candidate.<sup>10</sup> Compared to Saakashvili, Bakradze was also not perceived as a strong political figure.

Nino Burjanadze (the Chair of the Democratic Movement—United Georgia opposition party) was viewed as the third noteworthy candidate for president.<sup>11</sup> Burjanadze adopted a radical position on the issue of *restoration of justice*, thereby becoming to some extent the center of gravity for the segment of the electorate that demanded criminalization of the National Movement. In addition, Burjanadze began to question Georgia's pro-Western foreign trajectory and openly articulated an intention to seek closer ties with Russia. To the majority of Georgia's political spectrum, this approach was perceived, to some extent, as setting a bad tone.

Of the three above-mentioned candidates, only the Georgian Dream candidate had a real chance of being elected the President of Georgia. According to observers, the real action would take place in the struggle for second place because this race was expected to show whether the National Movement had maintained its status as the primary opposition force.

The presidential campaign of the Georgian Dream Coalition showed clearly that Ivanishvili was the main source of its legitimacy.<sup>12</sup>

Margvelashvili's campaign videos featured him alongside Ivanishvili. Interestingly, Ivanishvili himself emphasized Margvelashvili's ethics and managerial<sup>13</sup> skills, not his ideological stance (e.g., "Look at this skilled manager" or "Today we are electing a worthy man, and Georgia will have a worthy president").

Margvelashvili's election campaign revealed that the Georgian Dream had

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<sup>10</sup>In the final years of the National Movement, public opinion suggested the existence of two forces in government: *the hawks* and *the doves*. The National Movement candidate in the 2013 presidential election was considered a representative of *the doves*.

<sup>11</sup>Before 2008 Burjanadze served as Chair of Parliament when the National Movement held a majority of seats.

<sup>12</sup>Toward the end of the election season, Ivanishvili expressed disappointment that the public had failed to provide sufficient support to Margvelashvili; according to Ivanishvili, this failure disheartened him personally. He publicized a scenario of possible events that could occur following the exit of the Georgian Dream from politics. Certain opposition parties and groups perceived this statement as political blackmail.

<sup>13</sup>This may be regarded as the Georgian manifestation of technocracy and the approach to politics described in the previous chapter

obtained a “monopoly” to speak on behalf of the people. His campaign video ads featured assemblies of people as the backdrop, and the main slogan read, “It must be clear that the people and the government are one.” Of the three presidential candidates, only Margvelashvili strove to avoid adopting a particular ideological stance and instead attempted to remain as close as possible to the electoral center. He articulated “commendable goals” rather than the means of achieving them. His speeches were characterized by sweeping statements and ambiguity.<sup>14</sup>

Bakradze’s election rhetoric built upon the increasingly strong pro-Western trajectory in Georgia’s development. Ideologically, Bakradze’s election campaign was more consistent, articulating the right-wing view of economic development (e.g., tax cuts, limited regulation, economic amnesty and the establishment of a stable investment environment). The so-called negative campaign played an important role in Bakradze’s campaign because it emphasized the ineffective governance of Ivanishvili’s cabinet, as well as its failure to fulfill its promises.

### **Quantitative study of electoral behavior**

A survey to study electoral behavior was conducted between October 1 and October 20, 2013 (see attachment #1 for sampling methodology). The purpose of the research was to analyze electoral behavior in relation to the top political agenda.

We conducted a preliminary media analysis to reveal the salient political

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<sup>14</sup> Journalist’s question: “As President of Georgia, what is your top objective?”

Margvelashvili’s answer: “This is my vision of Georgia in five years; that is, after the completion of my tenure. Georgia will be a democratic country that protects all human rights, including political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental. It will be a country with a stable trajectory of economic development, in which unemployment has been defeated and people strive and work for peace and prosperity. Georgia will be viewed as a reliable partner in the international community, a country characterized by the development of all fields of social life, including culture, sciences, sports and journalism, among others. A country where civil society is developing independently of the authorities – although society constantly monitors the government’s performance. A country where business interests are protected and all conditions are in place for the development of entrepreneurship. A state that cherishes its citizens and in which the political situation is stable and steps are being taken to regulate territorial disputes and conflicts. A country where the European trajectory of development is stable and irreversible and is not questioned at home or abroad.”

issues that dominated the electoral campaign. The analysis showed that there were several issues at the top of the political agenda. All of these issues were operationalized and reflected in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire included questions that sought to identify basic values. These questions were designed to reveal the interviewee's position in the following dimensions: universalism vs. particularism, right wing vs. left wing and majority rule vs. republicanism. These dimensions were included in the research in an effort to trace a coherent connection between the interviewee's values and his attitude toward issues on the political agenda.

The questionnaire also explored sociodemographic and media factors. We aimed to examine linkages between the sociodemographic and media variables of the interviewee, on the one hand, and the political preferences of the interviewee, on the other (see attachment #2: a full version of the questionnaire).

**General attitudes of the population:** According to the quantitative research data, during election season, 47 percent<sup>15</sup> of interviewees believed that the country was headed in the right direction, whereas 24 percent felt that the country was moving in the wrong direction.

The research revealed that the strong societal polarization that characterized the 2012 parliamentary election existed ahead of the presidential election as well.

Slightly over one-quarter of the interviewees (26 percent) support the peaceful coexistence of the supporters of the previous and new governments. They also believe that cohabitation is an opportunity for political competition and the unification of the nation. In addition, 32 percent believe that the National Movement, which is currently an opposition force, must grow stronger to prevent the country from diverging from the right direction.

To some extent, the percentage of those unhappy with the previous regime mirrors the results of the 2012 parliamentary election, and 58 percent of interviewees believe that the National Movement should not remain in politics. The share of relatively radical opponents to the previous regime is 31 percent. This category supported the expulsion of National Movement representatives from district *gamgeoba* self-government after the 2012 parliamentary election.

In assessing legal developments and policies for the future, public opinion is split nearly down the middle. 29 percent believe that it is unacceptable to interfere with the decisions of Saakashvili-appointed judges before the expiration of their tenures; 30 percent oppose this notion. The blanket amnesty

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<sup>15</sup> Forty-seven percent is quite low for a regime that has just assumed power; corresponding statistics for previous regimes are higher.

adopted after the 2012 parliamentary election is commended by 43 percent of the interviewees and criticized by 33 percent.

Most interviewees (53 percent) have positive feelings about the constitutional amendments to limit presidential power in Georgia.

In summary, a high level of polarization persists ahead of the presidential election. Interestingly, only 3 percent of respondents believe that the *restoration of justice* is the country's top priority. Voter expectations relate mainly to job creation (31 percent), the implementation of social programs (26 percent), the promotion of economic growth (13 percent), and the restoration of territorial integrity (13 percent).<sup>16</sup> In contrast, an insignificant portion of voters are focused on non-economic issues (such as the strengthening of democracy and respect for human rights) (see attachment). In this regard, Georgian society remains far from the post-materialistic stage of development, which is characterized by the significance of non-materialistic and self-expression principles.

According to the research, 42 percent of voters remained undecided two to three weeks prior to the presidential election.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, the survey results indicated that Margvelashvili had the highest likelihood of winning because he had more supporters than any other presidential candidate (36 percent). The shares of voters that supported Bakradze and the National Movement were nearly identical (15 percent and 13 percent, respectively). The share represented by Georgian Dream supporters was greater than the share of voters in support of Margvelashvili's candidacy.

Given other statistics under our research, which show a high level of negative attitudes toward the previous regime, it is clear that the expected strategic behavior of the voters served Margvelashvili as an asset. Strategic behavior would manifest itself in the mobilization against the previous regime.

**Core structural axes of voting behavior:** The project team adapted two-dimensional spatial models of electoral competition for further data analysis. Two-dimensional space is formed based on the policy preferences of voters and assumes that voters are rational, policy-oriented actors who support parties or candidates based on ideological or issue proximity to party platforms.

To identify the axes that best represent the structure electoral behavior, we conducted a factor analysis of data related to issues of policy preference. As mentioned above, issues at the top of political agenda were revealed through preliminary media analysis.

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<sup>16</sup> Job creation has been the top priority for the past 15 years. The restoration of territorial integrity has been less urgent for a certain portion of the population in recent years.

<sup>17</sup> A strongly negative attitude toward all candidates was expressed by 2 percent of voters, indicating that these voters would not vote for any candidate.

The factor analysis of research results identified two core axes that defined voter behavior among respondents:

1. The Western vs. anti-Western axis –The analysis of voter’s electoral behavior indicates that attitudes toward Westernization have strong determinative power. Thus, voters’ opinions on whether Georgia should strengthen its partnerships with NATO and the EU form one axis of the spatial model.

2. The attitude toward the regime axis –The factor that is close in meaning to the issue called *restoration of justice* in public discourse defines another axis of the spatial model. This factor comprises voters’ attitudes toward 1) the restriction of presidential power; 2) the implementation of amnesty; and 3) retribution against the influential decision makers of the National Movement.

If we take voter attitude regarding the presidential system to represent the attitude toward Saakashvili’s regime, then this axis may be described as *the attitude toward the previous regime*.

Table 5.1. Factor Loadings<sup>18</sup>

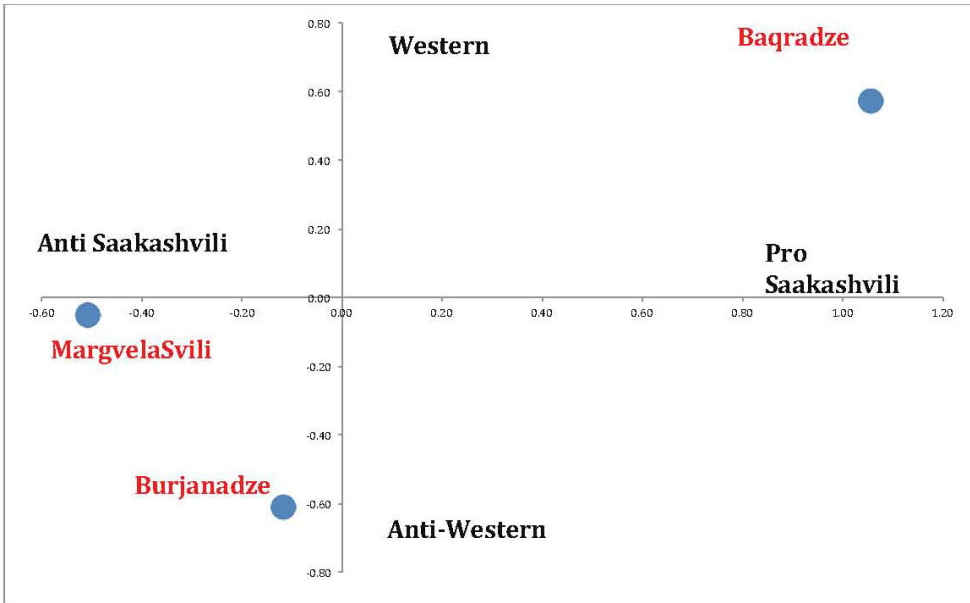
n=1000	Component	
	Regime	West
P1 NATO	-.126	<b>.874</b>
P2 EU	.03	<b>.886</b>
P10 Retribution	<b>.782</b>	-.099
E12 Restriction of presidential power	<b>.799</b>	.006
E11 Amnesty	<b>.798</b>	-.034
% of Variance	<b>38%</b>	<b>31%</b>
Cumulative %	40%	69%

The figure below depicts the positions of presidential candidates on a two-dimensional space defined by two factors. The designated positions of presidential candidates correspond to the statistical means of voters’ preferences, not to the positions articulated by the candidates themselves during their election campaigns.

<sup>18</sup> Extraction method: principal component analysis. Rotation method: varimax with Kaiser normalization



Figure 5.1 Voter distribution and candidate position in 2013



Data analysis in this two-dimensional spatial model reveals the following trends:

- The axes did not align with the ideological dimensions characteristic of party-based democracy. Although economic and social problems are viewed by voters as top priorities, different (e.g., right-wing or left-wing) approaches to solving these problems fail to create significant cleavages in society.
- Relative to the position of Bakradze, Margvelashvili's position in the two-dimensional space is closer to the center. As mentioned earlier, Margvelashvili's campaign was more populist than ideological. Margvelashvili's centrist views may be interpreted using the notion of valence introduced by contemporary theoreticians of voter behavior (Schofield, 2009),<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The notion of valence echoes the process of replacing ideological politics with politics focused on leaders. According to Schofield's approach, valence is the voters' perception of the ability of a party or candidate to handle the most serious problems facing the country. Thus, voters choose the party that they believe is most likely to deliver policy success. These perceptions might be based on party leaders' competence, integrity, moral outlook or "charisma". If electoral behavior is based exclusively on policy dimensions, a predominant centripetal tendency of all parties or candidates toward the electoral center should occur. When the valence factor is added to the model, divergence from the electoral center emerges, the coefficient of which depends on the candidate's valence. The lower a candidate's valence, the greater the likelihood that the candidate will tend toward a non-

If we suppose that in 2013, the candidates were projections of the valences of Ivanishvili and Saakashvili, it is evident that Margvelashvili was perceived as the candidate with the higher valence. Therefore, in line with N. Schofield's approach, taking a position closer to the center was the more rational decision on his part.

- The research reveals that a significant share of voters holds positions closer to the center. This may indicate that issues on the political agenda are irrelevant to a significant portion of the population and thus the interests of this population segment are not being represented. Both axes in the model explain the 0.2 percent variability of voter behavior in this category of interviewees.

- Bakradze's voters have clearly identifiable pro-Western attitudes. The position articulated by Bakradze during his election campaign more or less matches the positions of his voters, which suggests that Bakradze has a more consolidated electorate than those of the other two candidates. The positions of Margvelashvili and Burjanadze<sup>20</sup> in the two-dimensional space drastically differ from the positions articulated by them during the election campaigns. In particular, Margvelashvili's election rhetoric was pro-Western but the center of his voters' policy preferences is close to the center of the Western axis, in the anti-Western half.<sup>21</sup> In her election campaign, Burjanadze demanded that the previous regime be outlawed and that its representatives be severely punished, but her position on the axis showing attitude toward the previous regime lies closer to the center. Apparently, Burjanadze was more attractive to voters who prioritized an anti-Western position over retribution against the previous regime.

Why did voters who are not pro-Western vote for Margvelashvili rather than Burjanadze? One factor behind this behavior may be that for a portion of

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centrist position. Candidates with lower valence tend to move further away from the electoral center. Low-valence parties find that their vote-maximizing positions are at the electoral periphery. In certain contexts, the rational choice for party is to obtain sufficient votes to take several parliamentary seats and articulate radical positions.

<sup>20</sup> The number of potential voters for Burjanadze in the study is very small, which diminishes the statistical reliability of the relevant conclusions. Nonetheless, we describe the trends that we find interesting.

<sup>21</sup> As mentioned earlier, the survey was conducted several weeks before the election, and Margvelashvili's rating reflects the state of affairs at that time. In the election, the Georgian Dream succeeded in mobilizing most undecided voters. The crosstab analysis of the survey data reveals that these voters are more pro-Western than the voters who had selected Margvelashvili by the time of the survey. Based on the results of the election, these data enable us to speculate that the respective positions of Bakradze and Margvelashvili were likely to move even closer to each other on the Western axis.

the anti-Western electorate, the regime axis is more important than the Western axis. This group of voters thus opts for strategic behavior and votes for the candidate (Margvelashvili) who is more likely to defeat the National Movement candidate. This assumption is supported by the statistics presented below, which describe the explanatory potential of these two axes.

- Regression analysis of the data shows that **the axis of attitude toward the regime** is more explanatory than the Western axis is with respect to voter behavior. In particular, both axes explain 37 percent of the variability of the behavior of Bakradze's voters ( $r=0.37$ ). If we treat this 37 percent as 100 percent and calculate the explanatory potential of each axis, we see that 67 percent of the variability of the behavior of Bakradze's voters can be explained by the axis of attitude toward the previous regime whereas the remaining 33 percent is explained by the axis of pro-Western orientation.

Regarding Margvelashvili's voters, 20 percent of the variability of their behavior is explained by both axes ( $r=0.20$ ). The explanatory potentials of the two axes is nearly identical to that in Bakradze's case—the axis of attitude toward the previous regime explains 68 percent of the variability, and the pro-Western axis accounts for the remaining 32 percent.

How can the relation between sociodemographic characteristics and voter political preferences be described? An analysis of the research data reveals that the explanatory potential of sociodemographic variables is low. In particular, the unity of four variables (the educational level of the interviewee, the wealth of the interviewee's family, the age of the interviewee and locality size) explains only 3 percent of the variability of the behavior of Bakradze's voters and only 5 percent of the behavior of Margvelashvili's voters.<sup>22</sup>

These statistics reveal that the ties between interviewees' sociodemographic characteristics and their voting behavior, which existed in the *golden age* of party-based democracy in the West,<sup>23</sup> are not present in Georgia.

*This may be indicative of the absence of party-based representation of socioeconomic groups in Georgia.*

Interestingly, regional variables have a greater explanatory potential than

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<sup>22</sup> As mentioned earlier, the number of potential voters for Burjanadze in the research is very small, which diminishes the statistical reliability of the relevant conclusions. Nonetheless, the explanatory potential of the sociodemographic variables for potential Burjanadze voters is slightly higher (10 percent). Her voters are older and have less education and fewer economic resources. In addition, compared with the other two presidential candidates, Burjanadze has fewer voters in large cities.

<sup>23</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, these types of ties were stronger in the period prior to the 1970s, when the model of party representation defined Western democracy.

sociodemographic variables on voter behavior. In particular, the region variable accounts for 35 percent of the variability in respondents' positions in relation to the regime axis ( $r=0.35$ ).

Similar linkages were found with respect to the 2008 presidential election. For example, Saakashvili gained the greatest support in the Samegrelo Region.<sup>24</sup>

Under Saakashvili's rule, opponent voters were clearly grouped in the capital and big cities. A number of researchers maintain that better access to information in cities explains this categorization. Others argue that state institutions in nonurban areas were activated under Saakashvili, significantly improving regional infrastructure.

The four sociodemographic variables mentioned above collectively explain only 15% of the variability in respondents' positions in relation to the Western axis ( $r=0.15$ ). Although the explanatory power of these variables is low, it is higher than that in the case of presidential candidates (we explain this situation in the following section).

*The most interesting linkage revealed by our data analysis is that the positioning of respondents as a TV audience was a stronger predictor of respondents' positions on the regime axis. Specifically, 40 percent of the variability on this axis is explained by respondents' level of trust in particular TV stations.*

*Rustavi 2* is deemed the most reliable television station by 95 percent of Bakradze's voters, whereas 73 percent of Margvelashvili's voters put their trust in *MaestroTV*.

If we juxtapose these statistics with the explanatory potential of sociodemographic variables, we can argue that the situation in Georgia is better explained by the concept of television democracy than by the terms of representative democracy.

Of course, nothing can be said about the direction of causality. We do not argue that particular partisan television stations define the political positions of its viewers. On the contrary, voters may have more trust in television stations that better reflect their political preferences.

In any case, there is a strong connection between these two factors, which may be described as a bi-causal, resonant connection. The resonating character

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<sup>24</sup> Regional support for one political force or another may be explained by historical, contextual factors. For example, former President Gamsakhurdia enjoyed the greatest support in his native region of Samegrelo. In the first years of Shevardnadze's rule, this region was plagued by raids conducted by irrepressible paramilitary groups, which generated negative attitudes toward Shevardnadze in Samegrelo. One might speculate that these attitudes were among the most important factors behind the support enjoyed by Saakashvili's regime in Samegrelo.

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of this connection means that as the connection developed, each factor started to empower the other.

Given the high level of polarization in the Georgian media,<sup>25</sup> one might assert that this resonant connection is counterproductive to the search for shared interpretations in society.

**Right wing vs. left wing ideologeme:** As stated earlier, the data reveal that most respondents consider problems pertaining to Georgia's economy and social policy to be the most urgent. However, different approaches to solving these problems fail to create cleavages.

According to the data, the *right wing vs. left wing* continuum is meaningless to the Georgian voter.<sup>26</sup> This dimension does not create cleavages in society.

Given the clearly liberal rhetoric in Bakradze's election campaign,<sup>27</sup> it was expected that his voters would hold liberal views on economic issues. However, the data reveal that there is no statistically significant difference between the economic views of the supporters of different presidential candidates.

V5.1 To keep people employed, the State must build State-owned factories and industries		V5.2 The State must not intervene in the functioning of the economy because people are better employed through private businesses and a free market	
Completely agree	Agree more than disagree	Completely agree	Agree more than disagree
1	2	3	4

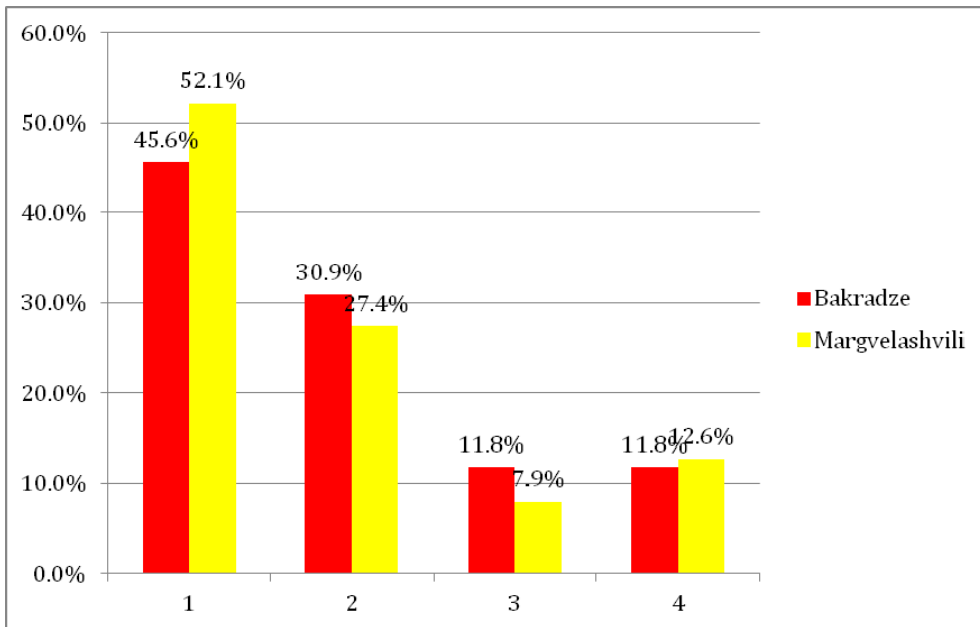
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<sup>25</sup> It might be argued that the Georgian media are better than any other in the postmodern world at fragmenting narratives. The narratives produced by Georgian television stations exist in parallel worlds, failing even to intersect with one another. It is typical for Georgian politicians to take umbrage at "unfriendly" television stations. Consequently, the viewers of a particular television station receive one-sided political opinions. The next link in this chain is the crystallization of fragmented narratives into rigid heuristic tools, which in turn is followed by the use of these tools to interpret facts. This sequence of events is evident in the 2012 parliamentary election season.

<sup>26</sup> The respondent's position on this continuum is measured by his attitude toward state interference in the economy.

<sup>27</sup> We refer here to liberalism in relation to economic issues.

Graph 5.1. Distributions of the supporters of Margvelashvili and Bakradze (V5.1 and V5.2)



Analysis of the research data reveal a striking inconsistency in respondents' attitudes toward economic issues. Specifically, a large group of interviewees (64 percent) *simultaneously* believe that the state must build state-owned plants and factories to ensure economic development and that economic development must stem from a free market (attach.#2. V5.1. and P16).

Most interviewees (66 percent) support the implementation of *both* liberal and protectionist economic policies. Specifically, they believe both that the government should pay more attention to the creation of an investment-friendly environment for foreigners and that the government should limit imports from abroad to promote the development of local production (attach.#2, P8 and P9).

The interviewees do not perceive the implementation of social programs as related to a particular ideological platform. Rather, the majority of interviewees view the implementation of social programs as "alleviating the hardship of common folk:"

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“To me, universal health insurance, free school manuals, cultivation of land for peasants and changes to the Labor Code means primarily ...”

Alleviating the hardship of common folk	78%
Focusing exclusively on today at the expense of future economic development	7%
Moving toward the establishment of a common European welfare state	7%
Bringing back elements of Soviet welfare	3%
Don't know	5%

In general, the opinions of most respondents regarding economic development remain statist in nature. Most interviewees consider the state to be the main actor in economic development, with 89 percent believing that most of the country's hospitals and outpatient clinics must be owned by the state and municipalities. In addition, 73 percent believe that the state must build and run factories to create jobs. Apparently, Soviet influence on public opinion remains strong.

Most respondents have little interest in the country's long-term development programs. Approximately 70 percent of respondents believe that the implementation of social programs must be given priority even if this requires diverting funds from infrastructure projects and increasing business taxes.

Moreover, a portion of respondents do not recognize that enhancing social programs generally entails raising taxes. Only 46 percent of the interviewees are willing to live in a state that imposes higher taxes to ensure universal education and healthcare (attach.#2 V7.1).

How can such mutually exclusive ideas coexist peacefully in the public mind? How do people manage to combine incompatible ideas to draw a picture of the world that makes perfect sense to them? Apparently, there is no cognitively consonant interpretation scheme for the Georgian voter that explains the relation between economy and politics.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Although this type of thinking is cognitively dissonant, it may nonetheless be *emotionally* consonant for a respondent. If a respondent attaches positive emotions to two notions (for example, “attraction of foreign investments” and “protectionist policy in relation to local

For example, *right wing vs. left wing* is meaningful to European voters as an interpretation scheme. European voters understand that if they support enhancements to social programs, they should expect increased taxes because the expansion of social programs and low taxes are less likely to occur simultaneously. Left-wing and right-wing supporters agree on this social picture of the world; their debate is over which approach is preferable.

*The views of Georgia's population on economic development are so inconsistent that they are absurd in terms of economic thinking and ideological dimensions (the right-wing vs. left-wing continuum).<sup>29</sup>*

Regarding the social dimension of the *right-wing vs. left-wing* ideologeme, the only parameter that distinguishes the supporters of Bakradze from those of Margvelashvili is their attitudes toward the involvement of the Georgian Orthodox Christian Church in politics. Attitudes regarding the rights of sexual minorities are equally negative in both groups.

Researchers have noted that the linkage between economic and social values that is typical in Western countries takes a different form in post-Soviet countries. Namely, the following pairings are more common in post-Soviet space: 1. Economic liberalism and social liberalism and 2. Leftist economic positions and social conservatism. Although we observe such pairings in Georgian public space as well, the data reveal that these combinations are weakly manifested in the minds of ordinary voters.

The statistical analysis also reveals no significant difference between supporters of Bakradze and Margvelashvili in terms of their views on basic values (see attach, #2. V block).

Thus, the data indicate that that ideological positions based on values do not define voter behavior in Georgia.

**The sustainability of the West and Regime axes:** Earlier in the paper, we described two axes that shaped a spatial model of electoral competition. It is natural to ask whether these axes are enduring or temporary. In other words, to what degree are these axes characterized by sustainability?

Interesting information relevant to this issue may be found in an analysis

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production”), that respondent may succeed in combining these two notions in an economically incompatible scheme.

<sup>29</sup> This inconsistency may be due to a number of factors, including the following: 1) Georgia is inexperienced in terms of ideological policy; the country previously was “a classless state” but leapt directly into postmodern democracy; 2) the blue-collar working class, which would be a basis for left-wing ideology in Georgia, does not actually exist in this country; 3) the *right wing vs. left wing* dimension is not often actualized in public political discourse; and 4) the level of economic education among the population is low.



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of a survey conducted after the 2008 presidential election (Schofield, et al, 2012).

In that analysis, one of the axes on a two-dimensional space is quite similar to one of ours, namely, the axis shaped by the voter attitudes toward NATO, the European Union, and the USA.

The second axis in that analysis is shaped by voters' assessments of democracy under Saakashvili's regime. Saakashvili's supporters believe that the state of democracy in the country is acceptable, whereas those in favor of other presidential candidates have negative perceptions of Georgian democracy.

The polarization of the electorates of the two main presidential candidates (M. Saakashvili and L. Gachechiladze) is more intense on the axis that evaluates democracy under Saakashvili's regime. Thus, similarities exist between the pictures from 2008 and those from 2013. It can be stated unequivocally that the axis representing attitude toward the West maintains sustainability as one of the most important dimensions of voter behavior.

The second axis identified in 2008 is shaped by two factors: attitude toward democracy as a value and attitude toward Saakashvili's regime.

Certain similarities may be identified between the second axis in the 2008 analysis and our axis representing attitude toward Saakashvili's regime. However, the empirical data are insufficient to assess the closeness of the meanings of these two axes.

Undoubtedly, attitude toward Western integration is a sustainable political cleavage in Georgian society.

What does the axis of *Western integration* mean with respect to public opinion? Is this axis linked to a certain political or ideological content? The data reveal a weak link between support for a liberal economy and the pro-Western orientation of respondents. No connection between any other value dimension and the Western integration axis has been identified.

Pro-Western development is viewed by more than one-third of the population as a generally positive trend that is not linked to particular policies or their content:

For me, pro-Western development primarily means:

Rapid progress and development for the country	38%
The establishment of democracy and respect for individuals	12%
Protection from Russia by NATO	12%
Inhibition of Georgia's originality and national traditions	13%
Don't know	26%

### The manifestation of the two axes in the public space (or life)

The confrontation between *pro-regime* and *anti-regime* is best discerned in Georgia's social and political life. The competition between challenger political parties is usually most intense for the *anti-regime* niche.<sup>30</sup> Mass protests against the regime take place under the aegis of a clash between "ordinary people" and "government bigwigs", which resembles new European populism. Anti-systemic attitudes characteristic of populism were most vivid in Georgia in 2012.<sup>31</sup>

No clearly articulated *right wing vs. left wing* confrontation is found in Georgia's public life. Leftist slogans fail to mobilize sizeable protest rallies. Class conflict in Georgia has been replaced with a struggle against the regimes.<sup>32</sup>

A strong tendency toward negative mobilization – a type of strategic behavior – can be found ahead of the elections in Georgia. Negative mobilization is a retrospective type of voter behavior defined by a desire to oust the regime currently in power rather than by political preferences.<sup>33</sup>

Unlike tendencies toward negative mobilization in the West, the desire of Georgian voters to replace the ruling regime involves the election of a new political force (leader) that has never been in power.

Clashes along the two axes (regime and West) are visible in every field of social life (partisan television channels, the nongovernmental sector, the expert community, so-called celebrities, etc.).

Media outlets often cover violent clashes between NGOs associated with different regimes.<sup>34</sup>

In the nongovernmental sector, the *Western vs. anti-Western* dimension is clearly articulated in the public space. On one end of the spectrum, organizations that represent international nongovernmental networks are especially active in the media and the social environment.<sup>35</sup> These organizations consider their primary responsibilities to be assisting the Georgian government to fulfill its

<sup>30</sup> Before the 2003 parliamentary election, the role of the most powerful anti-regime party was played by the National Movement, which took it from the nominally left-wing Labor Party. Interestingly, the election rhetoric of these two forces was quite similar.

<sup>31</sup> Before the 2012 election, buildings in Georgia's cities were tagged with the inscription "The system must be destroyed."

<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, political identities are related primarily to regimes. The use of somewhat offensive nicknames to refer to a person ("Naci" is a supporter of Saakashvili's regime, whereas "Qoci" is a supporter of Ivanishvili's regime) is more common and eloquent than referring to the person's ideological views.

<sup>33</sup> The most popular National Movement slogan in 2003 was "Georgia without Shevardnadze."

<sup>34</sup> Low visibility in the public space is characteristic of nongovernmental organizations that focus on the representation of the interests of particular social, economic, and professional groups.

<sup>35</sup> For example, "Transparency International Georgia", "Fair Elections" and GYLA.

international obligations and advancing Georgia's Western integration. For the most part, their public rhetoric addresses whether a given regime has fulfilled its obligations to the international community. Their activities may be regarded as the Georgian manifestation of the *watchdog* described by Rosanvallon in the context of civil democracy.

On the other end of the spectrum, we observe ultraconservative groups and movements characterized by xenophobic and conspiracy-based rhetoric. These groups oppose regimes activity that they perceive as antinational; they also oppose groups that are believed by them to undermine the Georgian identity (e.g., "Sorosians", "homosexuals", "spies", etc.).

### **Two axes, the utilitarian interests of voters and the regimes**

This section seeks to understand the connection between the dimensions of voter behavior and the utilitarian interests of voters. The utilitarian interests of voters include both economic and psychological (i.e., issues pertinent to identity) security. we will express certain opinions as to how the dimensions identified by factor analysis relate to the utilitarian interests of voters.

As discussed above, the empirical study reveals that correlations between sociodemographic variables and the axes are weak. Nevertheless, the explanatory power of sociodemographic variables is greater for the variability on the *Western* axis than for the variability on the *attitude-toward-the-regime* axis.

Given the history of Georgia's independence, which spans 25 years, it is easier to interpret the ties between the *Western* axis and the utilitarian interests of the people. Georgia's post-Communist transformation commenced amid globalization. Western countries and international organizations played an important role in the institutional transformation of Georgia, providing both financial resources and technical expertise.<sup>36</sup> External legitimization was just as important as internal legitimization in Georgian politics.

Georgia struggled to gain a foothold in the global economic environment<sup>37</sup> and to understand the new information economics. The economic expertise accumulated under Soviet rule proved useless in this process, and a good knowledge of English and the skills necessary to work with international organizations became the most important preconditions for human capital to

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<sup>36</sup> The following joke circulated under E. Shevardnadze's regime: "The IMF is the only true right-wing party in Georgia."

<sup>37</sup> Policies seeking engagement in the global economy grew stronger under M. Saakashvili, and active benchmarking was in place. As a result of cooperation between the team led by K. Bendukidze and the World Bank, Georgia advanced from 100<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> place in the Ease of Doing Business Index.

gain a competitive advantage in the labor market. The “Georgian Yuppies” (Muskhelishvili, 1998), who possess these qualities, emerged in government bodies after the Rose Revolution.

Given the poor economic conditions in Georgia, access to the economic opportunities provided by international organizations became an important component of economic security. It is important to which social stratum voters believe they belong using this criterion.<sup>38</sup>

We have previously touched on the psychological tensions in Georgian society that are related to the *Western* axis. We reiterate only that to a largely traditionalist society that developed behind the *Iron Curtain*, Western social liberalism caused culture shock, which created a dilemma in the ultraconservative social segment between Western integration and national and religious identity.

Less clear are the connections between the utilitarian interests of voters,<sup>39</sup> attitudes toward the regime, and competition for the power to set the agenda. Even the analytical separation of these aspects of Georgia’s political process seems quite difficult.<sup>40</sup>

The historical and evolutionary model (Lipset and Rokkan) for translating conflicts of interest into politics is of little use when one seeks to understand democracy and capitalism as *top-down* political projects.

In fact, post-Communist transition features the reverse process, whereby reforms implemented by regimes are transformed into new social cleavages. Regimes were perceived as the main artificers of new types of inequalities because of the reforms implemented by the regimes.

What made Georgia different from the typical Eastern European

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<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, access to foreign financial resources as a new measure of inequality can also be observed in Georgia’s villages. A representative of one of the international organizations described this situation as follows: “When you bring money into a rural community, you unintentionally create anew privileged layer that is alienated from the village. For example, our organization funded different study groups for children of school age. We organized a day dedicated to environmental protection, when people collect garbage and clean up the environment. Children, teachers and parents who participate in study group activities participate in such events. The rest of the community stands nearby and mocks them, believing that it is not their responsibility and they don’t have to contribute” (Muskhelishvili et al., 2012, p. 65).

<sup>39</sup> In ideology-style politics, voters see clear connections between political platforms and their own personal interests (for example, in relation to taxes). In teleological political discourse of a transitional country, it is difficult for voters to find connections between their personal interests and position in the labor market, on the one hand, and teleological symbols, on the other hand.

<sup>40</sup> As mentioned in the previous section, no empirical connection is found.

environment was the peaceful coexistence of formal and informal<sup>41</sup> rules connecting the spheres of politics and economics. In Georgia, in addition, new inequalities were perceived as a function of informal relations with the regime, not as a function of depersonalized rules of the game<sup>42</sup>. A person's position in the labor market and his affiliation with the regime are viewed as correlates,<sup>43</sup> which further complicates opposition to the regime.

(Of course, this list of factors explaining the importance of the *regime* axis is not complete. For example, post-Soviet gravity may be another factor behind the importance of the *regime* axis. In particular, the post-Soviet statist mentality attributes all achievements/failures relating to development to a regime. Therefore, a change in regime is perceived as the main requirement for improvement.)<sup>44</sup>

Thus, the link between the utilitarian interests of voters and the *Western* axis is relatively clear and may be interpreted in terms of human capital and identity.

In contrast, this link is difficult to discern with respect to the *attitude toward the regime* axis. Apparently, the influence of contextual<sup>45</sup>, non-policy-

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<sup>41</sup> The strong influence of informal institutions may be explained by the peculiarities of Southern culture, such as the strength of bonding social capital.

<sup>42</sup> For example, privatization under E. Shevardnadze gave rise to a class of proprietors in Georgia. Under M. Saakashvili, the public spoke constantly of tenuous property rights and property redistribution. Immediately after B. Ivanishvili assumed power, there was talk of widespread nepotism. Each regime was the target of complaints regarding the absence of formal, depersonalized rules and relations between the regime and large businesses.

<sup>43</sup> Given the underdeveloped economy and high unemployment rate in Georgia, employment in public service is an attractive opportunity associated with economic welfare and stability. Under E. Shevardnadze, employment in the public sector ensured access to corrupt deals. The public joked that this process was "a fight for participation in corruption." Under M. Saakashvili's regime, after the streamlining of government bodies, high salaries were established for bureaucratic staff (according to the 2014 data provided by the National Statistics Office of Georgia, salaries in the public sector were second only to those in the financial sector). After a change of government, people who were active in the opposition to the previous regime anticipate employment in the public sector as a reward for their efforts. The competition for employment in government and self-government structures becomes more obvious when regimes change. For example, immediately after Ivanishvili assumed power, a fight ensued to expel supporters of the previous regime from the public sector.

<sup>44</sup> In the previous chapter, we described the results of an empirical study that indicate a high level of statist thinking.

<sup>45</sup> Contextual factors might include the position that voters (or regions) find themselves in due to policies implemented by the regime or to the informal networks that tie the voter/region to the regime. As stated in the previous section, our goal was to study

related factors and interpretations (e.g., by partisan television stations) on voter behavior is stronger in this dimension.

### **Georgia – Pre-democracy or Post-democracy?**

As described above, sociological research reveals that the type of representation that is characteristic of party-based ideological politics is not discernible in Georgia. The dimensions that structure voter behavior are attitudes toward the regime and toward the Western world. The television media, which viewers consider to be reliable sources of information, have a significant influence on people's attitudes toward the regime.

The importance of the regime – anti-regime axis indicates that the ideological clash along the *right wing vs. left wing* axis has been replaced in Georgia by the fight against regimes. Issues of accountability dominate political processes. Therefore, political processes may be interpreted in terms of accountability democracy, not representative democracy.

Below, we endeavor to review the factors and processes that might explain the failure of a political system based on the representation of socioeconomic groups to gain a foothold in Georgia in favor of a democracy of accountability, which has manifested itself through a fierce and persistent confrontation between the population and the regimes.

**The Paradigm of Transition, Representation and Agenda Setting.** Post-Communist democratization has differed substantially from the historical process of development of democracy in Europe. In Europe, class interests were formed first; parties that represented these interests were formed later (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Similar to other post-Soviet countries, the process of democratization and the transition to a market economy in Georgia were *top-down* political projects. Democracy and capitalism in Europe were the results of historical and evolutionary processes; in Georgia, these concepts were identified as goals to be achieved through a mandatory process of transition.

Because post-Communist transformation is a political project, the regime emerges as the main actor in this process.

One might ask why Georgian politics failed to develop in a manner that led to the representation of specific socioeconomic groups by political parties.

First, in the early 1990s, there were virtually no social groups in Georgia

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connections between political preferences and voter behavior. Consequently, contextual factors were not scrutinized in this study.

that could serve as the foundation of a representative political process. The illusionary classes that existed under the Soviet Union had vanished in Georgia. The economic collapse, rapid deindustrialization, and de-modernization of agriculture caused mass impoverishment, the atomization of society and the transformation of society into an amorphous unity.

In addition, the undertakings required to further Georgia's transition are to some extent incongruent with the principle of representation.

The *paradigm of transition* and relevant teleological discourse mean that national objectives and the consolidation of the country are priority issues. Representing the interests of specific groups and ensuring balance can wait until these national objectives have been achieved.

The *paradigm of transition* also involves perceptions of the stages of transition.

*Different perceptions of the stages of transition may indicate different agendas.*

Given the history of political clashes in Georgia since the 1990s,<sup>46</sup> we may posit that the fight for the power to set the agenda, as an aspect of the transitional process, was more important than the representation of the economic interests of a specific group. Similar to the other post-Soviet countries, the political processes in Georgia focused on the issues of nationalism, democracy, and security. Political debates included important questions such as "Which should come first, independence or democracy?" or "Which should have the higher priority, state-building or democracy?" The tension between different identities and worldviews was more manifest in the public discourse than was the incompatibility of economic interests, as evidenced by the negative labels used by different political forces to refer to one another ("red intelligentsia", "provincial Fascism", "Russia's spies", etc.). Dilemmas stemming from difficulties related to the transition process and its various stages emerged as new cleavages in society.

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<sup>46</sup>Although no political process to represent specific socioeconomic groups developed in Georgia, the political arena was teeming with political parties created around particular persons. This phenomenon may be called a simulacrum of pluralism that has been described by Thomas Carothers as feckless pluralism:

"These varied cases nonetheless share a common condition that seems at the root of feckless pluralism – the whole class of political elites, although plural and competitive, are profoundly isolated from the citizenry, rendering political life an ultimately hollow, unproductive exercise" (Carothers, 2002, p. 11)

### Agenda of Saakashvili's regime

The narrative of Saakashvili's regime on stages (of the agenda) and predominant national objectives and priorities may be described schematically as follows:

At this stage in the country's development enforced modernization and rapid economic growth are appropriate. Democratic consolidation should occur during the next stage.<sup>47</sup>

There is only one right, technocratic way to achieve these tasks. Therefore, political discourse must be replaced with technocratic discourse. Economic transformation is not a political issue; it is a technical issue. The nation is a corporation, and the government must be the CEO who leads this corporation down the correct path to economic growth. Effectiveness is the appropriate technocratic criterion to measure the performance of a given government.

In fact, this approach was an adaptation of new public management, which is the most popular doctrine in the West and is described in the previous chapter. Given the connection between economic globalization and the growing technocracy in politics, the following logic makes sense: amid globalization, a country must win the competition for financial resources and foreign investments; this is the national objective. Should a country lose this competition, both the rich and the poor will suffer.

Thus, the articulation of nationwide objectives is incongruous with a democracy founded upon the representation of socioeconomic groups.

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<sup>47</sup> Debates regarding the correlation between modernization, the economic situation, and democratic sustainability emerged in the theoretical literature in 1959, Lipset emphasized the ties between economic development and democracy.

The rationale behind this reasoning is as follows: a country's economic development spurs the development of complex institutions, the management of which by authoritarian methods is impossible. A later stage in the increasing differentiation of these institutions is the separation of *political* and the introduction of democracy. Democracy has its roots in economic development and modernization achieved under authoritarianism (Przeworski, et al, 2003,).

Studies reveal that the relation between the sustainability of authoritarianism and economic development is not linear. Authoritarianism is stable in extremely poor countries. If the average income per capita is between 4,000 and 7,000 USD, the likelihood of the destabilization of an authoritarian regime is high. However, this relation changes if the average income exceeds 7,000 USD, in which case an authoritarian regime has a stronger likelihood of survival. Although the correlation between economic development and the survival of authoritarian regimes is not consistent, an unambiguous trend can be discerned. Specifically, if authoritarianism collapses, democracy is sustainable only in countries in which per capita incomes are higher. In other words, a country's economic development predicts whether its democracy can be sustained.



**Ideology-based vs. coalition-based populist politics.** Georgia's political processes are not ideological in the European sense of the term. Rather, pre-election campaigns may be described as a battle between political forces to obtain a license to speak on behalf of the entire nation, not on behalf of a certain segment of society or socioeconomic group.

The articulation of alternative positions, which is characteristic of ideologies, is replaced with the articulation of a single, non-divisive issue or value.

A value and its slogan may be positive (e.g., "Georgia without poverty", "one million workplaces") or negative (e.g., "Georgia without Shevardnadze", "Georgia without corruption"). The slogan seeks to mobilize the entire nation, not merely a particular segment of the nation.

Symbolism, which is typical of a political discourse focused on national objectives, calls for the messianic figure of a leader on a special mission.<sup>48</sup> As a symbol, a popular leader plays the role of unifier and represents the entire nation, not a particular social group. Strategic coalitions<sup>49</sup> form around popular leaders to further their goal of winning elections.

Coalitions in Georgia strive to avoid clear-cut ideological positions because they are reluctant to be identified with particular groups. Instead, coalitions articulate national objectives.<sup>50</sup>

A brief evaluation of the history of Georgia after the country regained independence reveals the following pattern:<sup>51</sup> The coalition that is perceived by the majority of the population as the most uncompromising opponent of the previous regime and, simultaneously, as the strongest force, wins the election (or revolution) and assumes power.

The winning coalition assumes power with a clear parliamentary (and sometimes constitutional) majority and soon takes the top offices in other

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<sup>48</sup>As noted in the previous chapter, voter behavior studies in Western countries also reveal the growing importance of a leader. Political preference is counterbalanced by the valence of a political leader.

<sup>49</sup> What discerns the Georgian political process from European coalition politics is that coalitions in Georgia are established against the ruling political force ahead of elections for the purpose of winning elections, whereas coalitions in Europe are assembled after elections. Coalitions in Georgia are often negative in character; they combine ideologically incompatible forces, and the justification of this ideological incompatibility becomes a remote priority (for example, "Let us defeat Saakashvili's regime first and discuss ideology later").

<sup>50</sup> This is manifest in the names of the winning coalitions in the last four elections: *Round Table – Free Georgia*, led by Z. Gamsakhurdia; *Union of Citizens*, led by E. Shevardnadze; *National Movement*, led by M. Saakashvili; and *Georgian Dream*, led by B. Ivanishvili.

<sup>51</sup> Like all forms of generalization, the patterns described by us are somewhat schematic and fail to reflect the differences between regimes.

branches of government. Consequently, this coalition/party appears to merge with the state.

The coalition regime thus turns into a *strong, unbalanced* political actor in the implementation of transformative political and economic projects. Georgia lacks institutions that would provide a counterbalance to regimes.<sup>52</sup> There are no institutions in Georgia similar to those that have been established in the West as a result of long historical and evolutionary processes, such as legal universalism, a strong political opposition and civil society, among others. Thus, The *top-down* democratic transformation project implies that a strong regime would have to create the very institutions that would limit its authority.

Regimes have attempted to combine the incompatible, that is, to implement unpopular reforms and to maintain power under the conditions of declared democracy. As expected, no regime has successfully managed this feat leading to the regime's *mutation*, opportunism, incomplete reforms and façade policies.

As a rule, regimes are hesitant to decentralize governance and to implement reforms that would promote further democratization.<sup>53</sup> Regimes have failed to institutionalize societal conflicts within the political system; this failure triggers protest rallies and demonstrations demanding the resignation of the regime.

In addition to mass protest rallies, ideological clashes among political actors and intellectual elites over national objectives and the stages of transition unfold in the public domain.

For example, under Saakashvili's regime, one segment of the political and intellectual classes demanded unconditional democratization, whereas others discerned risks related to this approach, noting the tension between democracy and liberalism. The latter segment spoke about modernization, the establishment of strong state institutions and economic development as preconditions of democracy.

Thus, it seems that the rationale behind the development of strong, messianic coalitions, that are designed to bring stability in political process,

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<sup>52</sup> Another characteristic of Georgian politics is the ruling coalition's attempt to elevate their position into the rank of common sense. Accordingly, criticism of and protests against ruling coalitions are regarded as betrayals of national interests, which are followed by attempts to marginalize opposition forces. Different regimes have used different terms to demonize the opposition ("Red intelligentsia", "the Kremlin's spies" [Z. Gamsakhurdia], "Russia's spies", "street opposition", "weak opposition" [M. Saakashvili], "criminals", "machinery of lies", and "destructive opposition" [B. Ivanishvili]).

<sup>53</sup> Again, justifications referred to teleological and messianic views of national interests.

creates societal tension along regime-anti regime axis. This axis principally differs from dimensions characteristic of representative democracy.

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What challenges will confront Georgian democracy in the near future? Will the *attitude toward the regime* axis maintain sustainability in the next election? Will the coalition scenario be used again to fight the regime?

After the resignation of Ivanishvili from the office of prime minister, his opponents identified a new challenge facing Georgian democracy. Specifically, the public could no longer identify the main political actor in Georgia and did not know who was running the country. Consequently, the traditional Georgian political problem – the fusion of formal and informal – takes a new and peculiar form: Ivanishvili actually governs political processes but is not subject to an adequate form of accountability. Thus, it is unclear how the political process, which we have described in terms of accountability democracy, will be shaped in the future.

### Discussion

We have presented views on the democratic transformation in Western countries and described the ongoing process in Georgia.

Parallels may be drawn between Western *post-democracy* and the political process in Georgia. Both processes are characterized by a focus on important national issues, not class interests, which manifested in Georgia through the establishment of coalitions without ideology and were reflected in Western democracies in the “catch-all” process that focuses on the median voter.<sup>54</sup> Both processes are also characterized by the importance of a political leader’s valence. The growing influence of the media on political processes is also present in both processes.

The increasing importance of the accountability principle at the expense of the representation principle is yet another feature of modern democracy. The dominance of the accountability principle in Georgia is exemplified by the fierce opposition to regimes and by strategic voter behavior.

Beyond these superficial similarities between the Western and Georgian processes may lie deeper differences. The transformation of Western democracy occurred in a society based on postmodern values. In contrast, the dominance of

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<sup>54</sup>As noted earlier, populism is the pathological form of this process.

accountability democracy in Georgia may be explained by the logic of a turbulent transformational society.

The foregoing raises the question of whether we are seeing the same type of a new democracy in Georgia as in the West.

How should we assess the importance of the *regime* axis in Georgia? Can we surmise that the country will plunge into a vicious cycle (instead of transitional development) if the regime axis is the most important dimension of voter behavior in the future, or can we view this process more positively and assume that the importance of the regime axis is a Georgian manifestation of retrospective voter behavior (which has grown stronger in the West) and accountability democracy? If so, has Georgia successfully “skipped” the stage of party-based representative democracy in its evolutionary process and simply joined the most recent Western trend? If so, Should we bemoan the absence of parties that represent the interests of sociodemographic groups or voter behavior that is not defined by solid ideological preferences? In this regard, what is the appropriate measure (even a normative measure) to judge whether the political process is “normal” or not? What should we use as a benchmark for further development?

## CHAPTER 6.

### Europe as an Empty Signifier

*Mariam Iakobidze*

The following case study describes the symbolic application of the notion of “Europe” in Georgia’s political discourse and argues that Europe is an empty signifier - Ernesto Laclau’s core concept that underlies his main theoretical project (radical democracy) – in this discourse.

In his expansion of the notion of empty signifiers, Laclau cited the works of Saussure and Lacan on signification (Laclau, 2006).

According to Saussure, the act of signification requires the establishment of a relation between two components: a signified and a signifier. The origins of the notion of empty signifiers derives from the suggestion made by Saussure and later radicalized by Lacan that in reality, the unity of signified/signifier is illusory. Consequently, a signifier is not tied to a specific signified, which means that the meaning of a signifier always lies in another signifier, not in reality, because reality objects to symbolization, according to Lacan<sup>1</sup>.

Lacan introduces the notion of master-signifier, which operates as *point de capiton* and gives meaning to a chain of signifiers thereby stabilizes the entire system. Henceforth, a master-signifier lies at the center of the system of signification; other signifiers are fixed and thus the discourse operates around the master-signifier.

Based on these concepts, Laclau develops his notion of empty signifiers.

#### Laclau’s notion of empty signifiers

Laclau describes modern society as a dispersal of various interests and social demands and maintains that the challenge in contemporary politics is to find a means to create unity out of diversity. According to Laclau, all demands are internally split into particularities. For instance, suppose employees demand higher wages. If they make this demand under a repressive regime, the demand will have a precise meaning/content (higher wages), but people will perceive this demand as a challenge to the entire system. The second, more universal aspect of the demand may generate other social demands, such as a student

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<sup>1</sup> Kontogiannis-Mandros, Angelos. Why do empty signifiers matter to politics?: A critical evaluation of Laclau’s work. [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)

demand for university autonomy. Given the specificity of both demands, they are essentially different from each other; however, they are perceived as equivalent in terms of confronting the system. If there is a third, essentially different demand that also challenges the system, then what Laclau calls a chain of equivalencies is created. At this point, the unity of demands, rather than individual demands, are represented on the surface. Given that the representative of all three demands is one particular demand (the first demand, which caused the development of the equivalential chain), this particular demand assumes the function of representing the chain of equivalencies. Laclau calls this demand an empty signifier. The signifier is described as empty because for the signifier to represent the totality of the equivalential chain, it must abandon its only relationship with the specific demand from which it originated and instead represent an array of demands that are in an equivalent relationship. Thus, the signifier becomes less particular and more universal; it is also a hegemonic signifier because it has the function of representing – through its particular body – the universality that transcends it (Campi, 2008). According to Laclau, two tendencies can be observed in contemporary societies: 1) the tendency toward universalization through the production of empty signifiers and 2) the tendency toward particularism of special demands. These two tendencies create a tension that is the very terrain on which the political system is constructed (Campi, 2008).

For Laclau, the construction of a democratic system depends on two dimensions that simultaneously contradict and complement each other. The horizontal dimension comprises the horizontal expansion of demands in the equivalential chain, and the vertical dimension is the unification of the chain of equivalential demands around one central, empty signifier. Both the horizontal dispersal and the vertical pole are necessary to produce democratic politics (Campi, 2008).

In one of his principal works, Laclau defines empty signifiers as follows: “*An empty signifier is, strictly speaking, a signifier without a signified*” (Laclau, 2006). Empty signifiers exist insofar as the system of signification is structured around an empty place, which results from the impossibility of unification of different social demands around one common positive object. It is not something positive shared by these demands that establishes their unity, but something negative – their opposition to a common enemy. For the demand to become an empty signifier, it has to establish a differential character that will place it opposite to all other demands. Second, the universal side of that demand generates other demands and puts them on horizontal level, thereby creating the chain of equivalencies which unites them around one negative object –

challenging the system. The emptying of a particular signifier of its particular, differential signified is what makes possible the emergence of “empty signifiers” as the signifiers of an absent totality (Campi, 2008). To maintain hegemony over the political, an empty signifier should constantly lack any particular content. Simply put, order as such has no content because it exists in different forms in which it is actually realized. However, in a situation of radical disorder, “order” exists as something that is absent; it becomes the empty signifier that signifies that absence. To hegemonize something means to perform this filling function (Laclau, 2006).

Just as master-signifier is the *point de capiton* around which the entire system stabilizes itself, chains of demands unite around empty signifiers, which are determined by the central signifier that provides political stability. However, empty signifiers reject this very regulation/stability. Because they are not based on reality or on a particular object/subject that they signify, empty signifiers have no particular meaning/content, that is, they have no “fixed” notion. The content of an empty signifier depends on who wins the constant competition to provide meaning to the empty signifier. In this context, empty signifiers create an area of political interaction in which various political groups battle for the hegemony of empty signifiers. Power and authority belong to those who determine the meaning of the empty signifier (to use Žižek’s example here, different political groups – from Marxists to liberals and conservatives – argue about the “true” meaning and content of democracy) (Butler, 2005). To maintain dominance, a representation must be ambiguous, which allows it to encompass all other competing representations. Therefore, a signifier has hegemony insofar as it lacks particular content. Consequently, empty signifiers are conditions of both stability and change, the latter because they are open to new hegemonic significations. Therefore, empty signifiers can explain the structure of political interactions and indicate the types of political and social developments that may occur in the future (Laclau, 2006, pp.36-47).

Based on the above reasoning, if we view political struggle as constant fight for hegemony over the content of empty signifiers, then it no longer matters whether the empty signifier is linked to reality or whether there is any objective truth beyond this system of signification because what matters in politics is hegemony over the content.

### Europe as an Empty Signifier

Over the years, the notion of Europe has developed into an empty signifier in Georgia, preserving its dominant position within the system despite the changeability of its interpretation. The ruling party, other political parties, NGOs and the media each clearly plays a part in the process of forming and determining empty signifiers. Therefore, the goal of my research was to identify and describe the transformation of Europe into an empty signifier in the context of ongoing political events and to explore the various interpretations of Europe by different social and political groups.

First, it must be noted that during the first years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the notion of Europe did not have the critical role in public discourse that it has today. Rather, the primary focus of public discourse was on national independence and national identity. Although the notion of the “West” was present as a benchmark, its contours were defined later, during the presidency of Eduard Shevardnadze. Georgia joined several international and regional organizations and ratified international agreements; experts on the West were actively engaged in the process of amending legislation or creating political documents; and the influx of Western money commenced with the creation of local branches of large international organizations. During that period, the West was perceived as the means of acquiring political independence and economic prosperity (a geopolitical interpretation) and as a good example of political and economic development (toward democracy and a market economy). Henceforth, the West covered everything – democracy, capitalism, Europe, EU, NATO, UNO, freedom, welfare, etc. The development of the “West” as an empty signifier is clearly linked to previous historical events, such as the Cold War. However, the political struggle over its determination, as exists today, did not commence until 2003. Political fights to obtain hegemony over the empty signifier ultimately led to the “Rose Revolution” of 2003.

Using symbolism, the new government, which was formed by young, Western-educated people, used its monopoly on “West” as an empty signifier to reinforce their authority. For instance, the EU flag began to appear in public spaces, especially on the buildings of state institutions, so that during media appearances, government representatives had both a Western symbol and the Georgian national symbol in the background. One feature of this political stage was accelerated or even instantaneous staff changes, and it was frequently emphasized that the new staff had been educated in Western (Europe/USA) countries and that the new government was coming in with Western values to



rebuild Georgian statehood, which had been destroyed by the Soviet mentality. The negative alternative to the new political governance was the Soviet Union.

“Europe” was slowly acquiring the content of the master signifier, “West”, and establishing itself in every field of public life. Whereas the notion of “West” had previously covered many concepts, the transformation and intertwining of concepts had commenced under the conditions of the new political discourse. Europe and EU were considered one signifier. Whereas Europe had expressed its moderate wish for cooperation in general, the new Georgian government promised unreservedly that Georgia would become a member state of the EU during its term in office. Later, when it became obvious that EU membership was not even a viable long-term prospect and that the fulfillment of this promise was impossible, a new signifier was introduced alongside Europe: “NATO”, which signified a guarantee of territorial integrity and national security. Although the discourse about Europe remained, the government now spoke not about membership in the EU but about the construction of new European state: “Next year in Georgia, we will spend more than an additional 700-800 million GEL exclusively on infrastructure. For other countries that joined the EU – the greatest achievement for Baltic and Eastern European Countries was that they got better roads and infrastructure. Although we will not be a member state of the EU, Georgia will have good infrastructure in all of its unoccupied territories”.<sup>2</sup>

Simultaneously, the negative signifier changed – Russia took the place of the Soviet Union – and a new discourse erupted – Euroatlantic integration. The foreign and domestic policies of the ruling party, which comprised a synthesis of neoliberal and liberal nationalist ideologies, was constructed entirely on NATO+EU/Russia binary opposition. With the involvement of the media, NGOs and a new education system, a new way of political thinking developed that unfailingly placed Europe in opposition to Russia. Debates in the public and academic spheres did not argue about the true essence of Europe, European values, the European governance system, etc. Instead, the discussions proceeded along a single dimension in which Europe, as an empty signifier, was interpreted in dichotomy with Russia. For instance, in his 2010 annual report, former president Mikheil Saakashvili made the following statement: “Within the next 2 years in Batumi, we will have more branded hotels than they have in Russia ... One day we will have free flights and a good relationship with Moscow, but trust me, it is better to pay higher fees but to arrive in Moscow as Europeans”<sup>3</sup>. On June 26, 2011, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

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<sup>2</sup> Public announcement of Mikheil Saakashvili in 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Annual Report of the President. 2010.

dispatched an official letter to various countries requesting that Georgia be referred to as “Georgia” (in Latin) and not as “Gruzia” (in Russian). Russia was associated with the past, traditions and evil. The politics of the Georgian government and its supporters was based on their domination over the discourse on Europe and the association of the country’s European development with a single party, the National Movement: “The alternative to our strategy is seized independence and hosting bosses from headquarters (Moscow) – this is not our choice”<sup>4</sup>.

One very interesting and completely overlooked historical fact is that since the 19th century, Georgia’s only access to Europe and European culture was through Russia. The social class that later played a decisive role in the country’s socioeconomic and political development – a class that included Ilia Chavchavadze – was educated in Russia. Their Russian education introduced them to European ideas, which they later distributed in Georgia. This interpretation of Russia is lost today.

If we consider the statements of former president Sakashvili and representatives of his team, as well as the prevailing media rhetoric, Europe is depicted as a positive signifier and was used to legitimize Sakashvili’s authority. In his annual report (March 15, 2007), Saakashvili made the following statement: “Georgia offers European-style autonomy to the Abkhazians and Osetians”. However, the precise content of that autonomy and the presumptions on which it was based were open to interpretation. In the same report, Saakashvili claimed as follows: “If the Georgian economy was previously attached to the Vladikavkaz and Ergneti markets, today it is linked to the London stock market”. He then adds that “Georgia is returning to its European family. We are not only Europeans but we are ancient Europeans ... Europe above all! – This is the main slogan of our foreign policy”<sup>5</sup>. In subsequent annual reports, Saakashvili constantly reiterated that “Our main goal is to construct a modern, European and successful state! The West is our path to real security and freedom“. If during the Soviet era, communism was a bright, imminent future with no alternative, then during the governance of the National Movement, the West, and Europe in particular, have become a similarly unopposed future for Georgia.

In the public space, which essentially was controlled by the government, there was one hegemonic discourse: the Georgian (as part of Europe)/Russian binary opposition. Any citizen or political group that deviated from this agenda was marginalized or declared a representative of the interests of the common

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<sup>4</sup> Annual Report of the President. 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Annual Report of the President. 2010. <http://civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=22407>

enemy. Every time a strong and organized protest spread throughout a large segment of the population, the government implemented its well-accepted routine: it used patriotic slogans to urge the opposition to unite with the rest of society in this decisive battle against a foreign enemy<sup>6</sup>.

From 2003 to 2012, there have been numerous anti-government demonstrations, rallies, and the like; however, based on their scale and importance, three events can be emphasized: the November demonstrations in 2007; the demonstrations in spring of 2009 and the violent raid on May 26, 2011. In all three cases, the government applied the same strategy – first, it proclaimed ignorance of the protests, refusing to recognize demonstrators as legitimate opponents. Then, as the protests reached their peak intensity, the government conducted violent raids of the demonstrations and declared demonstration participants to be Kremlin spies and enemies of Georgian statehood. For instance, during the rallies of November 2007, several days before their violent dispersal on November 7, representatives of the National Movement referred to the demonstrations cynically and described them as ridiculous. The Mayor of Tbilisi, Gigi Ugulava, stated that the demonstrations were a “dull imitation” of the events leading up to the Rose Revolution in 2003; the Chairman of the Defense and Security Committee of the Parliament, Givi Targamadze, claimed that the ongoing protests were not noteworthy enough to merit any attention. On Rustavi 2, when questioned about possible solutions to the current political crisis, Mr. Givi Targamadze answered as follows: “It does not need to be solved; we should just continue our work”. However, immediately after the violent and well-publicized dispersal of demonstrators, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began to publish full-length documentaries and secret recordings<sup>7</sup>. These publications were accompanied by the harsh statements of government representatives, who claimed that Russian interests and Russian money were behind the demonstrations and that the protestors had a well-organized plan for a violent coup, etc.<sup>8</sup>

Nearly identical events occurred before and after the raid on a rally on May 26, 2011. Several days prior to the raid, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Vano Merabishvili, made following statement on Rustavi 2: “Everyone can see that the statements and plans of these people are foolish and specious.

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<sup>6</sup> Annual Report of the President. 2009.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=16576&search=>;  
<http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=16575&search=>;

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=16583&search=> Mikheil Saakashvili’s statement after the raid of November 7; full text here>  
<http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=16586&search=>

Therefore, we will have commensurate reactions to these frivolous actions, in other words, no reaction at all ... they are so few and so weak today that they are unable to do anything, not even one-third of what they are promising ... they do not present even a slight threat". On May 24, 2011, two days before the raid that was conducted during the opening ceremony for Rike Park, President Saakashvili stated as follows: "These demonstrations might be ridiculous to me, but the organizers have very precise plans. They believe that all of this belongs to them and that people who arrive in the Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi airports should go through Russian border control – they want Soviet border guards in Georgia. They want people to arrive in Georgia not as in an independent country, but as one of the Russian provinces." After the violent raid of May 26, the Ministry of Internal Affairs released covert video and audio recordings to show that the demonstrators were planning violent attacks on state institutions and were fulfilling orders from the Kremlin. Hence, the demonstrators were charged with treason<sup>9</sup>. Because the government viewed Russia as the opposite of Europe, identification of the opposition with Russia also implied that the opposition was anti-European.

The contradictions inherent in the National Movement policy regarding Europe were telling. Saakashvili frequently reiterated that the goal of the government was to develop a European political system, which implied personal freedom, democracy and political stability, but simultaneously promoted the construction of Singapore-like model of a market economy<sup>10</sup>. Surprisingly, there has never been any public discussion regarding the contradiction between the European political and social system, which is based generally on the notion of a welfare state, and the neoliberal system of Singapore; this contradiction has not even been mentioned by any politician. At the same time the government was touting European democracy, it canceled labor inspections (in 2006) and introduced a new Labor Code that left employees with no remedies and put them in an extremely unequal relationship with employers. The cancelation of labor inspections caused an increase in the number of deaths of heavy industry workers<sup>11</sup>. Also during this period, in October 2009, Parliament adopted a blatantly anti-European economic document, the "Economic Freedom Act," which explicitly legalized minimum

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=24099> Mikheil Saakashvili: "The fifth convoy is openly operating in Georgia" <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=24101&search=>

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Mikheil Saakashvili on May 12, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> According to the joint data of the Georgian Trade Unions Confederation and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, approximately 273 people died following industrial injuries in 2007-2013, and 486 people were injured; [www.gutc.ge](http://www.gutc.ge)

state liability, the entire deregulation of the market and neoliberal economic hegemony.

How did the opposition react to these events? What discourses did the opposition employ (if any) regarding Europe? How did it challenge the government's "West/European" discourse? Based on our research and analyses, we will focus on the events that occurred before, during and after the demonstrations in November 2007. The reason for this focus is that these events marked a turning point for organized resistance, when different oppositional parties and forces united against the ruling party. Obviously, demonstrations, rallies, etc., occurred before November 2007, but those activities occurred primarily in response to high-profile cases (such as the *Sandro Girgvliani Case*) and were spontaneous and disorganized in nature. However, in October 2007, the opposition parties united under one movement, the People's Common Movement, which included ten opposition groups<sup>12</sup>. The ruling party linked this consolidation with ongoing events related to a former government official, Irakli Oqruashvili, who by that time had been arrested. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to claim that statements made by this former government official (a former member of the President's inner circle) in public and through the media regarding serious allegations of wrongdoing by the leaders of the ruling party played a role in the consolidation of the opposition parties. The main demands around which the opposition united were the followings: 1. hold the parliamentary elections within the constitutional term, in Spring 2008; 2. hold the elections in accordance with the principle of political parity by electoral administration; 3. issue mandates in majoritarian electoral districts based on the number of votes cast for each candidate; and 4. release political prisoners<sup>13</sup>. Several groups also spoke of replacing the presidential system with a parliamentary system<sup>14</sup>. The opposition constantly claimed that the constitutional amendments were undemocratic and unilateral and that the Georgia was currently plagued by gross violations of human rights and a lack of democracy. If the ruling party employed the Europe discourse as a means to legitimize its authority and to establish itself on the political spectrum, then the opposition challenged the ruling party not by reinterpreting Europe but by developing a new discourse, namely, the discourse of democracy. This strategy

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<sup>12</sup> The Labor Party, the Republican Party, the Conservative Party, the Freedom party, the People's party, etc. <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=16374>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=16376&search>

<sup>14</sup> "Georgia without a president!" <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=16255&search>

is especially evident in the joint Saguramo Manifest,<sup>15</sup> in which the opposition parties identify 12 core principles, most of which involve democracy issues. Europe is mentioned only once, in the final principle, which states that the harmonization of the Georgian legislature with the European legislature will be developed further. On several occasions during that time, the opposition hinted indirectly at its “Western political orientation”; for instance, when the opposition published an appeal to NATO member countries to explain why it was challenging the government<sup>16</sup> and when the opposition visited Strasbourg and held a number official meetings with EU representatives shortly before the demonstrations of November 2007<sup>17</sup>. However, in neither of these cases did the opposition argue for an alternative interpretation of Europe. In contrast, today, the Euro-Atlantic discourse has a complete hegemony over the public space and the positions of different political and societal groups are linked to alternative interpretations of Europe. This trend became especially clear when the Free Democrats withdrew from the coalition government in November 2014 and vied for the niche of legitimate political opposition, claiming that they were the only political force who offered a true European and Euro-Atlantic course.

As mentioned above, the National Movement regime was characterized by a political struggle between different discourses. In an environment dominated by the governments’ totalitarian discourse, the opposition survived by introducing a new discourse into the mix by focusing on democratic values, human rights and free media. The statement made by Bidzina Ivanishvili, the former Prime-Minister, in October 2011, when he publicly revealed his political intentions, can be characterized as the first attempt to deviate from the geopolitical interpretation of Europe: “We should expand our friendship and integration with United States and the EU and begin to settle relationships with Russia”. This statement marks the starting point for the development of alternative interpretations of Europe, the empty signifier.

The new government, which came into power through the parliamentary elections of 2012, chose not to legitimize its authority by employing new signifiers but rather to establish its hegemony based on the existing interpretation of Europe. In July 2013, Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili made the following statement: “Our foreign political course is immutable. We strongly believe that the path of Georgia’s democratic development leads inevitably to European and Euroatlantic integration. Our people are fully aware

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<sup>15</sup> In October 2007, the united opposition parties signed a joint manifest in Saguramo. For the full text, see <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=16370&search>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=16284&search>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=16427&search=>

that integration into the West is the only way to build a democratic country. Georgia is one of the oldest European countries and shares Europe's culture and values". The following quote is an excerpt from our interview of Ivanishvili in October 2013 during his visit to Latvia: "For us, Europe is not just a place to visit and have fun, as some people might think. A large number of visits does not make you European".

The shift in power made the media more open to alternative interpretations of Europe. Prior to this shift, the public space was dominated by one interpretation, which was created by the government. However, if we examine the discourses of different political parties and groups after the 2012 elections, different parties' interpretations of Europe can be identified: 1. National Movement – Europe as a geopolitical entity; 2. Republican Party/Free Democrats – "National Movement is not Europe, we are Europe" (note that for this group, Europe implies the EU, NATO and the US and thus is in opposition to Russia); 3. Georgian Dream – a less confrontational interpretation than that of the National Movement; 4. Conservatives (this refers not to the Conservative Party but rather to various conservative societal groups) – "We are Georgians, and we don't want Europe because it threatens our national identity and values"; 5. Leftists (which is the least visible approach in the public discourse) – Europe means leftism, progressive taxes and a welfare state.

The first and second discourses identified above dominate the public space. This situation creates an environment wherein political parties and political groups do not compete by establishing their ideological viewpoints and offering alternative policies but rather by fighting for the authority to determine the meaning of an empty signifier, which ultimately has more stability in the political and public discourse than the political forces that reinterpret it. If any entity, be it a political party or a societal group, fails to acknowledge the binary opposition of Europe and Russia – if it does not interpret Europe as being in confrontation with Russia – then this group is not acknowledged as a legitimate political opponent; it simply does not exist in the public space.

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## Attachment #1

### Survey Sample Model<sup>1</sup>

- Sample volume: 1000 respondents
- Sample type: multistage cluster probability sampling
- Sample basis: 2002 Census data
- At the first stage of the sampling, the entire population (18+) was divided into strata proportional to the sizes of regions (and districts, in the case of Tbilisi).
  - Cluster – census district in the stratum.
  - The cluster was defined as the primary point for sampling. Due to the small design effect, 6 respondents in each cluster were established as the target.
    - Households in the cluster – the secondary point of sampling.
    - Method of selecting a household – preliminarily defined streets and calculated roaming interval. The interval is defined based on the size and type of locality.
  - Method of choosing a household member as a respondent - Kish Table. The Kish table ensures the representative distribution of sociodemographic parameters.
  - Margin of Error 3-4%; confidence level-95%; margin of error for the specific regions – 6.1-10%.

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<sup>1</sup>Because the objective of the study was to analyze the context of Georgian political discourse, we focused on Georgian-speaking regions of the country.



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## Attachment # 2.

### Questionnaire

#### Evaluation of current policy

**E1. Citizens of Georgia have different attitudes toward the ongoing political situation in Georgia. In your opinion, how are events developing?**

1. In the right direction	10 (%)
2. Mainly in the right direction	37
3. Nothing has changed	21
4. Mainly in the wrong direction	14
5. In the wrong direction	11
99. Don't know	7

**E2. In your opinion, to what extent is Bidzina Ivanishvili's government keeping its pre-election promises?**

1. Successfully keeping	4
2. Mainly keeping	17
3. More or less keeping	48
4. Mainly not keeping	16
5. Not keeping at all	9
99. Don't know	5

**E3. What is your attitude toward the decision of Bidzina Ivanishvili to leave the position of prime minister and retire from politics?**

1. Positive	9
2. More positive than negative	14
3. Neutral	25
4. More negative than positive	20
5. Negative	27
99. Don't know	6

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**E4. There are various opinions on the degree of influence Bidzina Ivanishvili will have on Georgian politics after leaving the position of prime minister. I will now list several statements. Please select the statement with which you agree most (only one answer is possible)**

After leaving the position of Prime Minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili...

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Will still be the most influential figure in Georgian politics | 29 |
| 2. Will keep more or less significant influence                   | 35 |
| 3. Will lose most of his influence                                | 18 |
| 4. Will not be able to influence Georgian politics at all         | 7  |
| 99. Don't know  | 12 |

**E5. I would now like to ask the same question with respect to the president, Mikheil Saakashvili. How much influence on Georgian political processes will Mikheil Saakashvili retain after leaving the post of president? I will now list several statements. Please select the statement with which you agree most (only one answer is possible)**

After leaving the post of president, Mikheil Saakashvili:

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Will remain a very influential figure in Georgian politics | 6  |
| 2. Will keep more or less significant influence               | 20 |
| 3. Will lose most of his influence                            | 24 |
| 4. Will not be able to influence Georgian politics at all     | 41 |
| 99. Don't know  | 9  |

**E6. There are a many explanations for the existing problems in the country. Some people blame government, other people blame other forces. I will now list several reasons. Please select the reason that in your opinion provides the best explanation for the existing problems. Which listed reason provides the poorest explanation? Give respondent the card (only one answer is possible in each column)**

	<b>E6.1</b>	<b>E6.2</b> Least of
	Most of all	all
Poor governance	36	15
Society is passive and is not ready to participate in politics	22	30
Influence of the West (the USA, Europe)	10	13
Influence of Russia	15	12
Don't know	16	30

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**E7. To what extent do you agree with the opinion that during Mikheil Saakashvili's governance, people were subject to political discrimination, and the government frequently listened to private conversations, such that people were afraid to express their opinions and did not feel free?**

1. Absolutely agree	30
2. Agree more than disagree	36
3. Disagree more than agree	10
4. Absolutely disagree	10
99. Don't know	14

**E8. To what extent do you agree with the opinion that after the October elections, political discrimination ceased, conversations are not monitored, nobody is afraid to express their opinions and people feel free?**

1. Absolutely agree	15
2. Agree more than disagree	40
3. Disagree more than agree	14
4. Absolutely disagree	7
99. Don't know	24

**E9. To what extent do you agree with the opinion that Mikheil Saakashvili's government is partially responsible for starting the Russia-Georgia war of August 2008?**

1. Absolutely agree	16
2. Agree more than disagree	26
3. Disagree more than agree	22
4. Absolutely disagree	15
99. Don't know	22

**E10. What is your attitude toward the recent sale of large plots of agricultural land to large investors?**

1. Positive	1
2. More positive than negative	10
3. Neutral	18
4. More negative than positive	25
5. Negative	41
99. Don't know	4

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**E11. What is your attitude toward the constitutional amendments that limited the powers of the president and increased the powers of the parliament and the prime minister?**

1. Positive	15
2. More positive than negative	38
3. Neutral	21
4. More negative than positive	12
5. Negative	4
99. Don't know	8

**E12. What is your attitude toward the fact that after the parliamentary elections, the government granted mass amnesty and freed a significant number of prisoners from prison?**

1. Positive	11
2. More positive than negative	32
3. Neutral	17
4. More negative than positive	14
5. Negative	19
99. Don't know	4

**E13. What is your attitude toward the custody of former Prime Minister Vano Merabishvili and former Minister of Defense Bacho Akhalaia?**

1. Positive	30
2. More positive than negative	24
3. Neutral	15
4. More negative than positive	10
5. Negative	7
99. Don't know	11

**E14. What is your attitude toward the fact than after the October elections, the process of sacking National Movement representatives in municipal administrations began?**

1. Positive	8
2. More positive than negative	23
3. Neutral	29

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4. More negative than positive	19
5. Negative	10
99. Don't know	12

**E15. Citizens of Georgia have a variety of attitudes toward the government of Mikheil Saakashvili. Several statements are listed below. Please select the statement that best describes your attitude. (Only one answer is possible)**

1. I supported Mikheil Saakashvili's government from the very beginning and remain supportive	17
2. I supported Mikheil Saakashvili's government at the beginning but have changed my opinion and no longer support it	2
3. I did not support Mikheil Saakashvili's government at the beginning but later became its supporter	53
4. I have never supported Mikheil Saakashvili's government	14
99. No answer	13

**E16. Attitudes toward Bidzina Ivanishvili are also varied. Several statements are listed below. Please select the statement that best describes your attitude. (Only one answer is possible)**

1. I have supported Bidzina Ivanishvili from the moment he entered politics and remain supportive	48
2. I did not support Bidzina Ivanishvili at the beginning but later became his supporter	5
3. I supported Bidzina Ivanishvili at the beginning but have changed my opinion and no longer support him	13
4. I have never supported Bidzina Ivanishvili	18
99. No answer	16

### **Future strategies**

One of the goals of our research is to determine which plan for the future development of the country is most supported by the majority of the population. I will now list various political strategies. Please indicate the extent to which you support each of them.

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**P1. The government should strengthen the course toward NATO membership**

1. Support completely	29
2. Mainly support	32
3. I am neutral	14
4. Mainly do not support	9
5. Absolutely do not support	7
99. Don't know	9

**P2. The government should strengthen the course toward a close relationship and closeness to the EU**

1. Support completely	37
2. Mainly support	38
3. I am neutral	12
4. Mainly do not support	4
5. Absolutely do not support	2
99. Don't know	8

**P3. The government should take additional steps toward resolving and improving the relationship with Russia**

1. Support completely	33
2. Mainly support	40
3. I am neutral	11
4. Mainly do not support	9
5. Absolutely do not support	4
99. Don't know	4

**P4. The government should focus less on the interests of large states and more on the implementation of an independent national policy**

1. Support completely	16
2. Mainly support	40
3. I am neutral	17
4. Mainly do not support	17
5. Absolutely do not support	3
99. Don't know	8

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**P5. If the territorial conflicts involving Abkhazia and South Ossetia cannot be resolved peacefully, the government should consider resolving them through military action**

1. Support completely	1
2. Mainly support	3
3. I am neutral	2
4. Mainly do not support	10
5. Absolutely do not support	82
99. Don't know	3

**P6. The Orthodox Church of Georgia should become a more active participant in Georgian political life**

1. Support completely	17
2. Mainly support	24
3. I am neutral	14
4. Mainly do not support	13
5. Absolutely do not support	27
99. Don't know	5

**P7. The government should conduct new, special parliamentary elections in Georgia next year**

1. Support completely	14
2. Mainly support	28
3. I am neutral	21
4. Mainly do not support	11
5. Absolutely do not support	9
99. Don't know	17

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**P8. The government should do more to create a friendly environment for foreign investments**

1. Support completely	22
2. Mainly support	42
3. I am neutral	15
4. Mainly do not support	13
5. Absolutely do not support	3
99. Don't know	5

**P9. The government should restrict the import of certain foreign products to support the development of local production**

1. Support completely	41
2. Mainly support	33
3. I am neutral	14
4. Mainly do not support	8
5. Absolutely do not support	1
99. Don't know	3

**P10. To restore justice, former high officials in the National Movement should be held responsible in strict accordance with the law**

1. Support completely	30
2. Mainly support	33
3. I am neutral	8
4. Mainly do not support	11
5. Absolutely do not support	7
99. Don't know	10

**P11. There must be no interference with the work of judges appointed during Mikheil Saakashvili's governance until the judges' terms expire**

1. Support completely	7
2. Mainly support	21
3. I am neutral	21



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4. Mainly do not support	19
5. Absolutely do not support	11
99. Don't know	21

**P12. People with different sexual orientations (for example, homosexuals) should be able to openly declare their differences from traditional persons**

1. Support completely	1
2. Mainly support	3
3. I am neutral	8
4. Mainly do not support	11
5. Absolutely do not support	75
99. Don't know	3

**P13. People of all religions in Georgia should have the same opportunities as Orthodox Christians do to openly follow their religious beliefs**

1. Support completely	13
2. Mainly support	35
3. I am neutral	19
4. Mainly do not support	18
5. Absolutely do not support	12
99. Don't know	4

**P14. The State should be built on a national foundation, and the maintenance of national traditions should be the government's highest priority**

1. Support completely	47
2. Mainly support	46
3. I am neutral	4
4. Mainly do not support	1
5. Absolutely do not support	0
99. Don't know	2

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**P15. A major share of hospitals and ambulatories should be owned by the State and municipalities**

1. Support completely	54
2. Mainly support	35
3. I am neutral	7
4. Mainly do not support	2
5. Absolutely do not support	0
99. Don't know	2

**P16. Georgia should establish the “rules of the game” under which economic development will proceed based on free market principles**

1. Support completely	21
2. Mainly support	38
3. I am neutral	24
4. Mainly do not support	2
5. Absolutely do not support	0.3
99. Don't know	15

**In your opinion, which of the problems listed below should be the main priority of the government? The second priority? (Show the card)**

Problems	P17. 1 main priority	P17. 2 second priority
1 Close integration with Western countries and international organizations	2	1
2 Strengthening democracy and protecting human rights	4	3
3 Implementing social programs (health, education, pensions etc.)	26	20
4 Promoting economic growth	13	13
5 Establishing neighborly relations with Russia	3	5
6 Restoration of territorial integrity	13	18
7 Establishing fair relations and correcting injustice	3	5

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8	Creating jobs	31	24
9	Protecting national values and maintaining traditions	1	8
10	Regulation of prices	1	1
11	Decreasing taxes for businesses	0.5	1

### **Interpretations of position**

#### **I.1. Do you support pro-Western development of the country?**

1. Completely support	13
2. Mainly support	45
3. This issue is not very important to me	12
4. Mainly do not support	9
5. Absolutely do not support	4
99. Don't know	17

**I 1.1. I will now give you a card containing four phrases. Please select the phrase that in your opinion best completes the following statement:**

For me, pro-Western development primarily means:

1. Progress and fast development of the country	38
2. Establishment of democracy and respect of individuals	12
3. Protection from Russia through NATO	12
4. Restriction of the country's originality and of national traditions	13
99. Don't know	26

**I2. To what extent do you support co-habitation between the Georgian Dream and the National Movement?**

1. Completely support	6
2. Mainly support	20
3. This issue is not very important to me	20
4. Mainly do not support	16
5. Absolutely do not support	23
99. Don't know	15

---

**12.1 I will now give you a card containing four phrases. Please select that phrase that in your opinion best completes the following statement:**

For me, co-habitation between the Georgian Dream and the National Movement primarily means:

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. A reduction of political confrontation and uniting the nation  | 28 |
| 2. Consideration of the opinion of American and European partner countries                                    | 10 |
| 3. Interference with restoration of justice   | 23 |
| 4. Maintenance of the course of national development planned by the previous government by the new government | 7  |
| 99. Don't know  | 32 |

**13. To what extent do you support social reforms such as universal health insurance, free school manuals, cultivation of land for peasants and changes to the Labor Code?**

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Completely support                     | 48 |
| 2. Mainly support                         | 42 |
| 3. This issue is not very important to me | 3  |
| 4. Mainly do not support                  | 2  |
| 5. Absolutely do not support              | 1  |
| 99. Don't know                            | 4  |

**I 3.1 I will now give you a card containing four phrases. Please select the phrase that in your opinion best completes the following statement:**

For me, universal health insurance, free school manuals, the cultivation of land for peasants and changes to the Labor Code primarily mean:

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Alleviating the hardship of common folk                                 | 78 |
| 2. Thinking only about today at the expense of future economic development | 7  |
| 3. Moving toward the establishment of a common European-type welfare state | 7  |
| 4. Restoring the elements of Soviet-type welfare                           | 3  |
| 99. Don't know   | 5  |

Listed below are several statements that express various positions. Imagine that they were made by different political leaders. Would you please indicate the extent to which you would support a leader that expressed any of these positions: (for the interviewer: emphasize that the position is expressed by a leader, which the respondent must support or not support)

<b>I4. Position of the leader</b>	We must move toward the West as fast as possible, which will require changes to certain settled rules and traditions in society				
Will support by all means	Will probably support	This issue is not very important to me	Probably will not support	Will never support	Difficult to answer (do not read)
1	10	6	33	39	10

<b>I5. Position of the leader</b>	It is necessary to establish neighborly relations with Russia, even if it means forgoing NATO membership				
Will support by all means	Will probably support	This issue is not very important to me	Probably will not support	Will never support	Difficult to answer (do not read)
8	30	5	20	21	16

<b>I6. Position of the leader</b>	The democracy established in Georgia should respect political minorities (e.g., the National Movement or pro-Russian forces) and take their interests into consideration				
Will support by all means	Will probably support	This issue is not very important to me	Probably will not support	Will never support	Difficult to answer (do not read)
9	32	16	18	12	13

<b>I7. Position of the leader</b>	To reduce poverty, the State should spend more on pensions, social aid, free education and health, which will entail tax increases for businesses and the reduction of funds available for economic projects (roads, factories)				
Will support by all means	Will probably support	This issue is not very important to me	Probably will not support	Will never support	Difficult to answer (do not read)
23	47	4	12	3	12

### Basic values

**I will now list two statements. Please select the statement with which you agree?**

<b>V1.1</b> Today, it is necessary to implement reforms quickly, even if this causes displeasure for a certain segment of society		<b>V1.2</b> It is necessary to implement reforms carefully and gradually to account for the interests of all members of society, even if this approach slows the reform process	
Completely agree	Agree more than not	Completely agree	Agree more than not
10	25	45	17

99. Don't know -4

<b>V2.1</b> A leader should always adhere to recognized norms and laws, never breaking them and never making exceptions		<b>V2.2</b> Digressions from the norm (or breaches of the law) are sometimes permissible for a leader if, as a result, the problem is solved in a faster and more effective way	
Completely agree	Agree more than not	Completely agree	Agree more than not
23	28	25	19

99. Don't know - 6

V3.1 Today, it is possible for a person to achieve success through work and effort		V3.2 Today, it is impossible to achieve success through work and effort if you lack other privileges	
Completely agree	Agree more than not	Completely agree	Agree more than not
8	20	45	23

99. Don't know

V4.1 To achieve security and stability in the State, certain restrictions of human rights (e.g., freedom of speech, freedom of expression) are justified		V4.2 Restriction of human rights is never justified, even in cases in which the stability of the State is endangered	
Completely agree	Agree more than not	Completely agree	Agree more than not
8	30	35	17

99. Don't know

V5.1 To provide employment, the State must build, own and operate factories and industries		V5.2 The State must not intervene in the functioning of the economy; people will be better employed through private businesses and a free market	
Completely agree	Agree more than not	Completely agree	Agree more than not
47	26	13	8

99. Don't know - 6

**Imagine that a group of people (for example, a village) must make a decision on an issue. I will now describe two methods of making this decision. Please select the method that in your view is more justified.**

V6.1 The village should vote and accept the decision supported by the majority		V6.2 The village should try to find a solution that is supported by nearly all villagers, even if this process requires significant time and effort	
Completely agree	Agree more than not	Completely agree	Agree more than not
12	21	54	11

99. Don't know – 2

**I will now describe two types of states. Please select the state in which you would prefer to live.**

V7.1 In the first state people must pay a significant portion of their income to the state budget, but in return, the state provides more or less equal lifestyles, free education and health for the majority of the population		V7.2 In the second state, the state intervenes less in people's financial affairs. People pay a smaller portion of their income to the budget; as a result, more hard-working and/or talented people will live better, although many people may not succeed in this state	
Completely agree	More agree than not	Completely agree	More agree than not
19	27	33	11

99. Don't know – 10

**V8. Suppose you are looking for a job. I will now list four types of jobs. Please select the job you would choose. (To the interviewer: only one answer is possible)**

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. A well-paid job   | 23 |
| 2. A job that would give you significant responsibility and the respect of society       | 4  |
| 3. A job that would be interesting to you and would enable you to realize your potential | 14 |
| 4. A stable job that you would not worry about losing                                    | 56 |
| 99. Don't know   | 2  |



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**Presidential election of October 27**

**A1. In your opinion, how fair will the presidential election scheduled for October 27 be? (Please consider the possibility of violations on election day as well as during the entire election and electoral campaign processes)**

1. Completely fair;	31
2. More fair than not;	45
3. Mostly unfair;	9
4. Completely unfair;	1
99. Don't know	14

**A2. Are you going to participate in the presidential election scheduled for October 27?**

1. Will participate by all means	78
2. I think I will participate	13
3. I think I will not participate	3
4. I will definitely not participate (go to question L1)	3
99. Don't know/ have not decided yet/ no answer	

**A3. Which candidate are you going to vote for (would you vote for if you decide to go) in the presidential election scheduled for October 27?**

1. Nino Burdjanadze	3
2. David Bakradze	15
3. Giorgi Margvelashvili	36
4. Other (write) -----	2
77. Have not decided yet	42
78. No one	2

---

**L1. When we ask why Georgian citizens prefer this or that candidate, they give various reasons. Which of the reasons listed below is the most important to you in selecting a candidate?**

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. I vote for the candidate who can defeat other candidate (candidates) who would be very undesirable for the country           | 5  |
| 2. I like the political positions and vision of the candidate and of the political team that he belongs to.                     | 42 |
| 3. The candidate I have chosen has the personal characteristics, experience, reputation and vision that a president should have | 40 |
| 99. Don't know  | 13 |

**Accusations and supportive attitudes**

Finally, I would like you to once again express your attitude toward accusations or supportive attitudes that may often be heard in relation to various political forces. I will now list several statements. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of them – completely agree, agree more than not, disagree more than agree or completely disagree.

**S1. Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Georgian Dream have come to power with help of Russia and are dangerous for the country**

Completely agree	Agree more than not	Disagree more than agree	Completely disagree	Don't know
4	11	20	49	16

**S2. Mikheil Saakashvili and the National Movement have committed such serious crimes that they must not stay in politics**

Completely agree	Agree more than not	Disagree more than agree	Completely disagree	Difficult to answer (do not read)
30	28	15	13	14

---

**S3. Nino Burdjanadze has made political moves that indicate she cannot be trusted**

Completely agree	Agree more than not	Disagree more than agree	Completely disagree	Difficult to answer (do not read)
21	32	19	9	19

**S4. The bloc currently in power, the Georgian Dream, should continue to govern the country because it will successfully lead the country out of crisis**

Completely agree	Agree more than not	Disagree more than agree	Completely disagree	Difficult to answer (do not read)
31	33	14	7	15

**S5. The National Movement, which is currently the opposition, should strengthen itself; otherwise, the country may stray from the correct course**

Completely agree	Agree more than not	Disagree more than agree	Completely disagree	Difficult to answer (do not read)
12	20	20	34	14

**S6. Nino Burdjanadze and Democratic Movement – United Georgia should strengthen themselves because this is the only political force that expresses the attitudes of the people**

Completely agree	Agree more than not	Disagree more than agree	Completely disagree	Difficult to answer (do not read)
3	10	29	38	20

**S7. None of the forces that are currently active in the political arena expresses the interests of the people. A completely new force is needed in politics and in power because the country needs restructuring and a different perspective**

Completely agree	Agree more than not	Disagree more than agree	Completely disagree	Difficult to answer (do not read)
4	20	32	23	22

**Political preferences, political activity and the media**

**PP. In your opinion, which political party expresses the interests of people like you?**

1.The Georgian Dream	44
2.The United National Movement	13
3.Christian Democratic Union	2
4.Free Democrats	0.6
5.The Labor Party	0
6.The republican Party	0.5
7.Social Democrats for Development of Georgia	0
8.Democratic Movement – United Georgia	4
9.No one	11
10. Don't know	23

**B. Please indicate how often you do the following things:**

Behavior	Often	Seldom	Never
B1 Talk about politics	29	54	17
B2 Attend public meetings with the party or the candidate	4	15	81
B3 Participate in meetings/rallies	2	6	92
B4 Make comments about political issues on social networks or the Internet	1	3	96
B5 Have membership in a political party or movement	4	1	95

B6	Help a party or candidate (as a volunteer or for payment)	3	4	92
B7	Make public statements on important issues in the media or at meetings for the purpose of shaping public opinion	0	1	99
B8	Work for a political force in exchange for a payment or salary	2	2	96
B9	Other -----			

**M1. How often do you watch (listen to, read) political information (news, talk shows, evaluations)?**

Every day	Often (several times a week)	Seldom (once a week or once every two weeks)	Never (go to question M4)	No answer
32	34	30	4	0

**Do you watch political information on TV?**

1. Often	61
2. Seldom	35
3. Never (go to question M4)	4
99. No Answer	

**M3. Please evaluate each television channel in terms of its acceptability/trustworthiness or unacceptability/untrustworthiness to you. If any channel is not accessible to you or you have never watched it, we will note your answer in the appropriate column.**

		One of the most acceptable	More acceptable than not	More unacceptable than acceptable	One of the most unacceptable	Have never watched	No access	No answer
M3.1	Rustavi 2	31	44	13	3	3		
M3.2	Maestro	27	33	3	1	10	22	
M3.3	Objective	9	25	2	1	25	34	

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M3.4	Imedi	42	47	2	0	3	2	
M3.5	Caucasia	4	24	4	1	23	40	
M3.6	First channel	8	44	12	2	20	11	
M3.7	Second channel	2	19	4	1	31	39	
M3.8	Local television (write)	6	14	1	0	9	65	
M3.9	Russian channels	6	23	1	0	26	43	

**M4. How often do you use the Internet to get information about political events?**

- |               |    |
|---------------|----|
| 1. Every day  | 4  |
| 2. Often      | 9  |
| 3. Seldom     | 13 |
| 4. Never      | 75 |
| 99. No answer |    |

**The respondent profile**

**R1. In addition to Georgian, which language do you know best?**

- |                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| 1. Russian                        | 67 |
| 2. English                        | 5  |
| 3. German, French, other European | 2  |
| 4. Armenian                       | 1  |
| 5. Azerbaijanian, Turkish         | 1  |
| 6. No other language              | 24 |

**R2. People have a variety of attitudes toward religious issues. Which of the statements listed below best describes your attitude?**

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. I am a deeply religious person, I very often go to church (mosque, synagogue, other), and I perform almost all obligatory behavior (for example, prayer, fast etc.) required by my religion. | 9  |
| 2. I am a religious person and go to church, but I do not perform all obligatory behavior and church rituals  | 54 |
| 3. I believe in God, but I do not go to church  | 36 |

---

4. I am not sure that God exists, nor am I sure that God does not exist	0.4
5. I am an atheist	0.7
99. No answer	0.3

### **R3. Which religion do you follow?**

1. Orthodox Christian	93
2. Catholic Christian	0.2
3. Jehovah's Witness	0.3
4. Muslim	4
5. Gregorian	1
6. Judaist	0.2
99. No answer	

### **R4. Do you work currently?**

1. Yes	36
2. No (go to question R6)	64

**R5. In which of the categories listed below do you belong?** (Only one answer is possible. In the case of the simultaneous existence of several statuses, please emphasize the status that you think is most significant in terms of income)

1. Self-employed (or owner of a business without employees)	17
2. Owner of a business with employees	30
3. Manager in a public organization	2
4. Non-managerial worker in a public organization	21
5. Manager in a private organization	2
6. Non-managerial worker in a private organization	31
7. Employee of a non-governmental or international organization	1
8. Farmer (peasant), without employees	23
9. Farmer (peasant), with employees	1
10. Other	0.3

---

**R6. Which of the following describes your current status? (One answer is possible)**

1. Pensioner	38
2. Housewife	16
3. Student	4
4. Unemployed, actively looking for work	34
5. Unemployed, not looking for work	8

**W1. Based on the material and economic situation of your family, to which of the following categories do you think you belong?**

1. The family income is not even enough to buy food	32
2. We cannot buy anything besides food and other bare essentials	42
3. We manage to buy food and clothes/shoes, but we cannot buy more expensive things (TV set, computer etc.)	23
4. We can buy anything we need for the family (including machinery) without problems	2
5. We can buy anything (including a flat)	2

**W2. In which of the following categories does the monthly income of your family belong?**

1. Less than 200 GEL	26
2. 201-400 GEL	31
3. 401-600 GEL	16
4. 601-800 GEL	8
5. 801-1000 GEL	6
6. 1000-1500 GEL	3
7. 1501-2000 GEL	1
8. More than 2000 GEL	0,4
99. No answer	8

**R9. Sex of the respondent**

1. Female	66
2. Male	34



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**R10. Age of the respondent**

18-24	10
25-34	16
35-44	18
45-54	21
55-64	15
65 and older	20

**R11. Education of the respondent:**

1. Incomplete secondary	4
2. Secondary	36
3. Secondary vocational	24
4. Higher, incomplete higher	37
5. Scientific degree	

**G1.Region of the respondent:**

1. Adjara	9
2. Guria	3
3. Imereti	17
4. Samegrelo	11
5. Shida Qartli	7
6. Qvemo Qartli	10
7. Mtskheta-mtianeti	2
8. Khakheti	9
9. Samtskhe-Javakheti	3
10. Tbilisi	28

**G3. Dwelling place of the respondent**

1. Village	44
2. Settlement	5
3. Small town (approximately 20 000 – 100 000 people)	12
4. Large town (more than 100 000 people)	39

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